

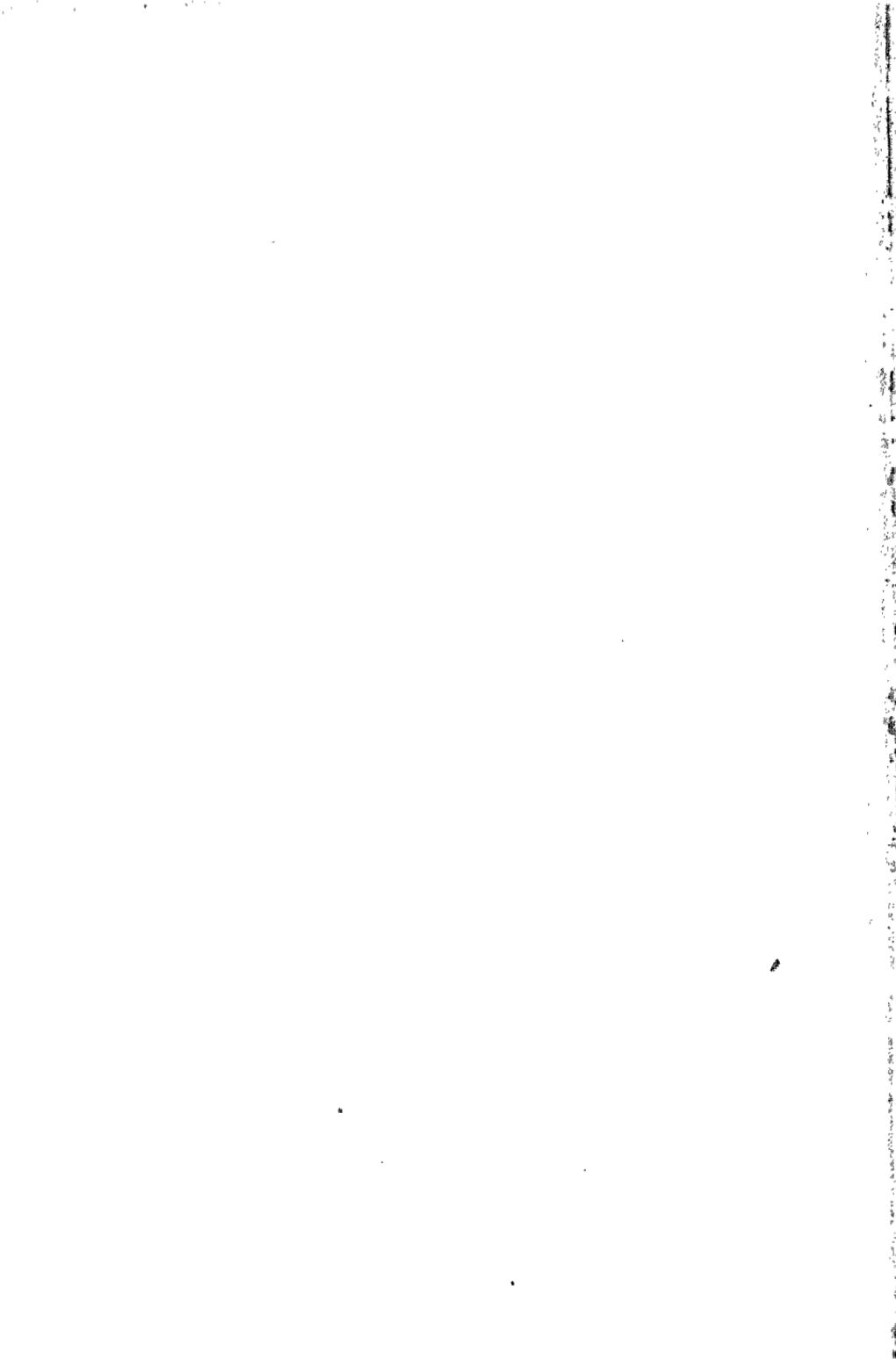
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THE DOCTRINE OF SURVIVALS





THE DOCTRINE OF SURVIVALS

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENTIFIC
METHOD IN THE STUDY OF MAN

By

MARGARET T. HODGEN

*Assistant Professor of Social Institutions in
the University of California*



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PREFACE

IT is clear to all students of culture that civilization is a compound of traits and institutions of different ages. Some are so new that children of school age remember the impact of their introduction. Others, and by far the larger number, are so old that their origins have escaped the recorded memory of man. Among scholars, interest in the problem of invention and cultural change has been unflagging. But the means by which the culturally old has been transmitted from generation to generation has been relatively neglected. During the last century, it is true, certain types of old ideas and activities have been collected and classified by folk-loreists with indefatigable industry. Certain groups of scholars, recognizing their documentary import, have employed them to reconstruct the human past. But there, with a few exceptions, the matter has ended. Inquiry has failed to concern itself with problems of cultural persistence, or the processes of tradition. Although the following essay on the doctrine of survivals is in no sense an effort to deal with that question, it is hoped that a history of the concept, together with its use by nineteenth-century developmentalists will throw the larger problem into high relief, provoke further discussion and lead to investigation.

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Owing to the British sources of the doctrine and the singularly repetitious character of the vast literature to which it gave rise throughout the world of scholarship, it has seemed wise for brevity's sake to restrict discussion to English materials. From the standpoint of the history of methodology in the social studies, its employment by continental inquirers has followed British models. No good purpose would have been served by echoing reiterations in other languages.

For similar reasons no attempt has been made to offer a complete bibliography of those who have collected or employed survivals. It would only have been coterminous with the literature of folk-lore and the history of social institutions. From time to time, however, a few short lists of significant titles have been offered, usually in chronological arrangement. These, it is hoped, will serve an illustrative purpose, or, by indicating neighbouring fields of inquiry, suggest promising lines of research in the history of methodological ideas.

To those familiar with the *Theory of History* by Frederick John Teggart the author's profound indebtedness will be apparent. Without it and his generous encouragement this book could not have been written.

LONDON, ENGLAND,
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I

A PERIOD OF DOUBT: DEVELOPMENTALISM VERSUS DEGENERATIONISM

IT is said that the historian of the natural sciences is more interested in the sequence of discoveries and inventions than in the ideas which have been employed to obtain access to the secrets of nature. Although notable exceptions exist, typical histories of scientific advancement tend to be anecdotal or biographical. They present their readers with accounts of the lives of famous investigators, inventories of new additions to the general store of knowledge, improvements in instruments of precision and examples of experimental ingenuity. The consideration of scientific ideas is usually left to the logician. By him their temporal appearance is treated primarily as a problem in logical relationships. The historical conditions under which old concepts persist or new ideas arise are largely ignored. And the problem of change in scientific method is thus removed from the realm of historical inquiry.

Whatever may be the merit of this plan of action in the historiography of the natural sciences, its irrelevance in dealing with the history of humanistic inquiry is obvious. For culture, society or mankind, as an object of interest, has been unresponsive to experi-

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mentation and the techniques evolved for use in the study of the non-human world. Although the social sciences inherit their present procedure from physics and biology, their legacy consist of concepts rather than inventions or instruments of precision. Hence, the historian of method in the social studies is compelled to be an historian of ideas. In dealing with change in method, he must bear in mind that concepts are modified only in periods of criticism and doubt, when old ideas are in jeopardy or have manifested their incompetence to control refractory materials. He must portray the several elements in the intellectual situation which give rise to uncertainty. He must then trace the logical and historical steps by which new ideas are introduced or old ones restored to esteem.

Such a critical period occurred in England in the early nineteenth century and threatened for a time to overturn long established procedures in humanistic inquiry. For a century or more before the third and fourth decade, it had been the practice of students of man to account for the differences in culture as the outcome of motion (or change) envisaged as slow, gradual, continuous and progressive. In so doing, they concerned themselves with the discovery of laws, or the orderly provision made by nature for the development, progress, or evolution of mankind and nations. They dedicated their powers to the recovery of the 'hypothetical', 'theoretical', 'ideal', or generalized

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history of mankind. This undertaking was based, however, upon the same assumptions which permitted the construction of the zoological series. It followed, therefore, that the 'theoretical' or 'ideal history' which has entered so extensively into the studies of anthropology, sociology and adjacent fields, became, methodologically speaking, an extension of biological inquiry and terminated with a 'natural' history of mankind.

The technique elaborated by the eighteenth century for the purpose of arriving at a reconstruction of the human past conceived in terms of a 'natural' or evolutionary series of cultural stages, was the comparative method.¹ That is to say, assuming the history of Europe or other civilized areas to have been a record of progressive change, the inquirer achieved a cultural series, parallelling the biological series, by the arrangement of present and co-existing cultures in an order suggested by the 'known' development of European or other historical peoples.

One of the most important aspects of the comparative method is to be found in the fact that two affirmations were logically prerequisite to its successful employment in the construction of a progressive cultural series. It was necessary, as a *first* step, to

¹ Frederick John Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven, 1925). John Bagnall Bury, *The Idea of Progress; an Inquiry into its Origin and Growth* (London, 1920), Jules Delvaille, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de progrès jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1910).

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designate among present primitive or backward peoples one whose cultural state could be equated with the earliest known condition of an advanced or historical people and be regarded, therefore, as the original stage out of which all subsequent stages had evolved. It was necessary further, as a *second* step, to endow primitive man conceptually with the capacity for unassisted improvement; to affirm that, although the contemporary savage had been outdistanced for the moment by the civilized man, the difference between civilization and backwardness was to be ascribed to inequality in the rate of change, not to difference in innate potentiality for progress.

Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century the literature presents only two stumbling blocks to the continuance of developmental inquiry in the study of man. The first of these arose in response to the obvious question, "Which, among all existing savage groups, is to be regarded as the lowest in the scale and designated as the first member of the cultural series?" The answer to this question was the occasion of vigorous controversy among travellers and naturalists, no two of whom could reach agreement. "Cook, Darwin, Fitzroy, and Wallis were decidedly in favour . . . of the Fuegians; Burchell maintained that the Bushmen (were) the lowest. D'Urville voted for the Australians and Tasmanians; Forster said that the people of Mallicolo 'bordered the nearest on the tribe

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of monkeys'; Owen (inclined) to the Andamaners; others . . . supported the North American Root-diggers; and one French writer even (insinuated) that monkeys (were) more human than Laplanders."¹ Although this question was never answered to the complete satisfaction of all concerned, no one doubted the possibility of a final solution. Hence, as an impediment to the employment of the comparative method, it was never regarded as insurmountable.

The second obstacle to the employment of the idea of progress as an organizing principle in the study of man was much more serious in character. In some cases, it appeared in relatively casual or non-scientific literatures in which theories of cultural retrogression were elaborated in response to theological or moral questions. In other cases, men of standing in the learned world, protecting themselves with every intellectual device dictated by methodological caution, embraced the doctrine of the degeneracy of savagery or denied to primitive culture the innate potentiality for advancement. Indeed, this group of anti-progressionist ideas occupied a much more important place in the early nineteenth century than is generally realized. As is usually the case, the dominant idea-system contained the stubborn elements of its own downfall. Pessimistic theories of cultural change

¹ John Lubbock, Lord Avebury, *Prehistoric Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages* (London, 1865), pp. 445-446.

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were advanced again and again by at least five different groups of thinkers, namely, theologians, romantic historians and missionaries; travellers and archæologists; colonial administrators and students of racial differences; economists and anti-reformers; and finally satirists of prevailing fashions in ideas.

The followers of John Wesley (1703-1791), for example, seeking through him a solution of the problem of evil, accounted all mankind the products of a sweeping process of corruption. As a member of a popular school of parish ethnology, Wesley's theory of social change was, of course, a peculiar compound of Biblical doctrine and missionary misinformation. As a clergyman committed to revival of 'primitive' Christianity, it was his desire to convince his hearers in the slums of London and along village lanes, that although man had fallen as the result of the sin of Adam, he could by an act of faith not only recover his lost status as a child of God, but find eternal happiness and remission from sin in a state of Grace. This well-known scheme of individual salvation and its parallel in terms of a philosophy of history was based upon a theory of original human nature, which, contrary to contemporary deistic ideas, envisaged man in his natural state as fundamentally bad.

Wesley, however, was not content with a purely logical defence of this position. No matter how closely it might accord with theological dogma, he

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felt that it could not stand without some other type of confirmation. Hence, many of his best known sermons are to be viewed as efforts to answer the questions "How do we *know* that man in the beginning, i.e., in his 'natural' state after the Fall and Deluge, was wretched, corrupt and degenerate? How can we be *sure* that, unless saved, he so continues in the present?" These questions were answered by assembling and interpreting evidence from descriptions of the classical 'heathen' by the authors of antiquity, from personal observations of contemporary Europeans and from conclusions concerning the condition of contemporary savagery reached as the result of his own unsuccessful missionary experience among the American Indians.

Concerning the latter no one could have been more emphatic than Wesley. "Justice they have none," he said, "and just as much regard for truth." They "do not appear to have any worship at all . . . they have no idea of prayer. . . . In truth, the bulk of these nations seem to be considerably more barbarous . . . than many tribes in the brute creation".¹ "The natural religion of the Greeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws and all other Indians . . . is to torture all their prisoners from morning to night, till at length they roast them to death. . . . Yea, it is a common thing among them, for

¹ John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. 9 (1st American Edition, Philadelphia, 1826-27), pp. 168-200.

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the son, if he thinks his father lives too long, to knock out his brains....¹ Finally, he asked, "... can we suppose the wise and righteous and merciful God would have established and continued such a constitution for the propagation of mankind... if there had not been some dreadful and universal degeneracy spread over them and their fathers....?"² The only exception to the general condemnation of primitive man by the great preacher is to be found in his treatment of the negroes.³ Among them in Georgia he made a few converts. Consequently, their lands in Africa are described as well-tilled, their government efficient, the people quiet and of good disposition. "In a word," says Wesley, quoting a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, "they revived in my mind the idea of our first parents and seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state," before the onset of corruption.

Returned missionaries, or those influenced by missionary apologetics, also employed theories of savage incapacity for advancement or of degeneration to explain small returns on investments made by homeland congregations in the foreign field. "Why have not nations generally advanced, and continued to advance, if the law of their nature is interminable

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 402.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 9, pp. 319-320.

³ Margaret T. Hodgen, "The Negro in the Anthropology of John Wesley," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 19 (1934), pp. 308-323.

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progress?" asked one typical commentator. "The Christian nations alone show this tendency. Others, upon a large scale, have been stationary for untold ages. Many have sunk from civilization into barbarism, and others have wholly disappeared. . . . There is not a heathen nation in the whole world that can be said to be in a state of progressive civilization . . . we mean of itself, and distinct from the influences that may come from some part of Christendom."¹ By traders, colonists, and colonial administrators the missionary movement was often credited with failure because of the invincible inferiority of those it sought to convert.² And students of the history of the institution of religion had long accounted for abhorrent savage rituals and the assumed absence of religious ideas among primitive peoples on the ground that their cultures represented a decadence from a higher religious condition.

Philosophical historians, attracted by the arguments of Rousseau or the ancient theory of historical cycles, obviously arranged their materials in accordance with a principle of organization other than that

¹ "Revolution and Religion," in *British Quarterly Review*, vol. 8 (1848), pp. 237-238. *Letters on the Nicobar Islanders* (1813); a review, *Quarterly Review*, vol. 11 (1814), p. 61.

² James Montgomery, *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, Esq.* (1831); a review, *American Quarterly Review*, vol. 12 (1832), p. 1. George Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa* (1827); a review, *American Quarterly Review*, vol. 2 (1827), p. 130. See also *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 26 (1829), pp. 341-350.

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of the idea of progress. Degeneration was not invoked by them, however, as by Wesley, to account for the moral condition of all human beings, or for the presence of savagery, but in explanation of civilization itself. To Rousseau and his followers the miseries and inadequacies of the modern European way of life set up an intellectual challenge which had to be met. By them, advanced culture was regarded as a decline from a nobler savage past. Arthur de Gobineau, on the other hand, and those who felt his influence, held that the perishability of high cultures was the "most striking, and at the same time, the most obscure of all the phenomena of history". Their recurrent downfall was ascribed to the mixture of superior, culture-elaborating peoples with inferior races incapable of improvement.¹

Still other historians, travellers, and archæologists confronted by the phenomenon of 'lost' culture, or the presence of barbarism on the ruins of ancient civilizations, appealed to the same group of anti-progressionist ideas. It was pointed out, for instance, that in Egypt, where masonry, goldsmith's work, weaving, and other arts had once reached an extraordinary level of development, modern Egyptians were living in a condition of semi-barbarism, unable

¹ Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races, with Particular References to Their Respective Influence on the Civil and Political History of Mankind*, from the French by H. Holtz (Philadelphia, 1856), p. 105, *passim*.

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to reproduce the work of their forefathers. Again, in Central America, the descendants of the people who had built the cities of Copan and Palenque were still living where the builders of these cities had once lived. But the old culture and civilization had totally disappeared and the ancient cities were in ruins. According to certain American archæologists, the Indian race presented two extremes of intellectual character; the one capable of a limited degree of civilization and refinement independent of external contact, the other exhibiting an abasement "which puts all mental culture at defiance". The one was represented by Central American cultures, composed of a handful of people, whose superiority and consequent acquisitions made them the prey of covetous European invaders; the other, by a vast multitude of savage tribes, whose barbarism had resisted improvement.¹ From such facts as these, it was urged that "high civilization is as difficult to keep as . . . to gain"; that all existing savages are in a condition below that occupied by their ancestors; and "that there is no intrinsic tendency in human societies . . . to pass ever on and ever up to something better and higher and nobler."²

Both the theory of the degeneration of primitive

¹ "American ethnology; being a summary of the results which have followed the investigation of this subject," *American Review*, vol. 9 (1849), pp. 385-398.

² Arthur Mitchell, *The Past in the Present. What is Civilization?* (New York, 1881), pp. 228-232; and innumerable other sources.

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man and the concept of the essential unimprovability of savage culture were often employed by statesmen in response to the problem of colonization, or the kindred one of justifying negro or West Indian slavery. British politicians felt that they had found good scientific justification for their failures in the social control of native peoples in the work of such men as Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859)¹ and James Hunt (1833-1869). The latter classified the negro as a species distinct from European man, unimprovable and therefore ineligible to a place in the progressive cultural series. "No people," said he firmly, "have so much communication with Christian Europeans as the people of Africa, where Christian bishops existed for centuries. The Negro race never civilized itself, but it has never accepted any other civilization. . . . From the most remote antiquity the Negro race seems to have been what it now is."² American pro-slavery agitators were equally well-served by Nott (1804-1873) and Gliddon (1809-1857), who asserted that "there is no such thing as a common human nature. . . . White men and red men, yellow men and black men, have no more original relationship to each other than the bears of the pole to the tigers of Africa. . . .

¹ Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America*, transplanted and edited by Thomasina Ross (London, 1852), pp. 293-294.

² James Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Memoirs read before the Anthropological Society of London*, vol. 1 (1863-1864), pp. 27, 29-30.

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The blacks do not belong to the same creation as the whites. . . . Their organization dooms them to slavery, and precludes them from improvement. . . .¹ In Parliamentary debates on the question of emancipation during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the eloquence of Pitt and Wilberforce was dedicated to a refutation of both ideas.² Strange to say, many abolitionists, especially in the United States, were also anti-progressionists. They regarded the negro as incapable of civilization except by contact, and deplored the extension of slavery, owing to the danger therein of degradation of the existing white culture.³ This attitude corresponded with that of Gobineau, whose essay on the moral and intellectual diversity of races included the assumption that the negro and other primitive peoples were incapable of advancement even in the presence of contact with civilization.⁴

British administrators and statesmen in the twenties

¹ Review of J. C. Nott and G. R. Gliddon, "Ethnological Researches; a Review Based upon Ancient Monuments, Paintings, Sculptures, and Crania of Races, and upon Their Natural, Geographical, Philosophical and Biblical History." *British Quarterly Review*, vol. 22 (1855), pp. 10-11. See also *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 13 (1823), pp. 647-666; *ibid.*, vol. 28 (1831), pp. 186-213; *ibid.*, vol. 30 (1831), pp. 459-466, 744-764.

² *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 34 (1798-1800), pp. 525-526. It should be recalled also that Wilberforce was an anti-progressionist in the sense that he regarded the backwardness of primitive people and the advancement of Europe as the result respectively of the absence or presence of contact.

³ "Remarks on the Resolutions and Manifestations of the Southern Caucus," *American Review*, vol. 9 (1849), pp. 221-234; "Hints Toward Conciliation," *American Whig Review*, vol. 12 (1850), pp. 114-126.

⁴ Gobineau, as cited, *passim*.

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and thirties were confused by a controversy over the conduct of colonial affairs in South Africa. One group, represented largely by traders and exploiters, expressed in word and deed the conviction that Africa was to be won for the empire only by the extermination of the blacks, who were pictured as culturally irreclaimable. Another, represented by the members of the African Institution, maintained that England bore the same relation to savage tribes in Africa that Rome had held with respect to the Ancient Britons, with equal hope of success in improving their condition.¹ The very vigour of those who advocated a humane policy, as well as their arguments, leaves no doubt of the popular and official acceptance of anti-progressionist theories. The same situation existed during the same period in the United States with reference to Indian policy.² A large literature had accumulated in which evidence was adduced to support the proposition that the Indian never had and never could advance beyond his existing condition. Civilization for them was said to be out of the question. "A residence of many years in polite society, education and a knowledge of the arts of polished life have been found insufficient to alter the instincts of

¹ Saxe Bannister, *Humane Policy; or, Justice to the Aborigines of the New Settlements Essential to a Due Expenditure of British Money, and to the Best Interest of the Natives* (London, 1830).

² Saxe Bannister, *Remarks on the Capability of the Indians of North America and on the Obstacles to Their Becoming Civilized* (London, 1822).

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of the savage."¹ Furthermore, Indian archaeological monuments were regarded by many as the work of people greatly superior to the rude tribes found by Europeans in those regions, and were therefore taken as indications of degeneration.²

Taken all in all, it is clear that the world of thought had been swept by a small tidal wave of social misgiving which showed itself finally in criticism of current economic optimism and ridicule of the complacent cant of reformers and progressionists. Protectionists in the United States and England attacked the doctrine of *laissez-faire* and Adam Smith's theory of the inevitable progress of opulence,³ asserting that deterioration could only be arrested by firm measures. Moved by the increase of human misery and disturbing protests among the masses, the intellectual press published numberless articles and reviews in which the question "Whither are we tending?" was answered in a spirit of acknowledged pessimism or ambiguous doubt. In his Inaugural Lecture, Dr. Arnold expressed the widely held opinion that progress was not inevitable. The elements of modern European civili-

¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (1835); a review, *American Quarterly Review*, vol. 19 (1836), pp. 157-158. *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 1 (1803), pp. 141-163; vol. 8 (1806), pp. 442-450. *American Quarterly Review*, vol. 11 (1832), pp. 284-309. *American Review*, vol. 5 (1847), pp. 177-190, 447-452.

² *Quarterly Review*, vol. 1 (1809), pp. 293-304; *ibid.*, vol. 54 (1835), pp. 392-413.

³ "Unity of the Whigs: Their Principles and Measures," *American Whig Review*, vol. 14 (1851), pp. 179-186. "Political Economists," *ibid.*, vol. 12 (1850), pp. 376-387.

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zation, said he, had been exhausted. Looking about him for another race which might conceivably receive the seed of advancement and germinate it, he reluctantly confessed that he found none adequate for the task.¹ The same theme appeared in the witty irony of Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866) and the clever anti-Darwinism of Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). In Peacock's *Gryll Grange*, *Crochet Castle* and other satires, every tendency of the age was pilloried, including spirit-rapping, cheap mechanical education, commercialism and competitive examinations. His chief targets, however, were pretentious scientists and self-approving reformers. The crocheteers or characters of his novels were not creatures of this world but simply so many personified ideas and interests. One Mr. Forster, a perfectibilian, urged an animal diet and discerned in mechanical inventions the sign of the approaching millennium. One Mr. Escot, probably Peacock himself, was a deteriorationist. Lord Curryfin had been caught by the science of pantopragmatics and firmly believed that a scientific organization for teaching everybody everything would cure all the ills of society. While the Rev. Dr. Opimian, repudiating this and every other hope of social progress, envisaged the course of cultural change as the substitution of a

¹ Thomas Arnold, *Christian Life, Its Course, Its Hindrances, and Its Helps. Sermons Preached Mostly in the Chapel of Rugby School* (London, 1831), pp. 36–39.

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worse race for a better. The sharpest ridicule in Kingsley's *Water Babies* was reserved, of course, for the zoologists and their sweeping assumption that phenomena at variance with evolutionary doctrine were therefore contrary to nature. "What, no water-babies?" said Kingsley to Tom, who had been giving the professors deferential attention. "Who are they to say that water-babies are lower than land-babies, or, if lower, that things cannot degrade or change downward?"¹ Let them recollect that there are two sides to every question, and a down-hill as well as an up-hill road. If, by the laws of circumstance, selection, and competition, beasts can turn into men, so, by the same laws, men can turn into beasts."² Side by side with the theory of development by natural causes "lies a theory of degradation by the same causes".³

It is obvious, of course, that such arguments, sound or unsound, were in entire opposition to the traditional and accepted procedure in the study of man. The 'natural' or evolutionary history of mankind could not be recovered if either civilized or primitive culture were admitted to be the outcome of degenerative change. The comparative method, as a technique for arranging materials in a progressive order, was inde-

¹ Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (London, 1880), pp. 85-87.

² *Ibid.*, p. 277.

³ Letter from Charles Kingsley to Sir John Lubbock in H. G. Hutchinson, *The Life of Sir John Lubbock, Lord Avebury*, vol. 1 (London, 1914), pp. 91-92.

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fensible, if some of the materials, themselves, were acknowledged as evidence of some non-progressive type of change. Nevertheless, in the face of such a possibility, humanistic inquiry as a whole was strangely undisturbed—at least for several decades. In dealing professionally with the problem of social change, students adhered to the old assumption that primitive man, in his very nature as a human being, was subject to an irresistible and inalienable law of progressive change, and they supported him as a rightful claimant to an appropriate place in the developmental series.

The import of contradictory doctrine remained unappreciated until well in the fifties and sixties, when it was brought unavoidably to their attention out of political economy, in the form of a reiterated statement of the theory of the degeneration of savagery. The name of the bearer of these subversive tidings, curiously enough, is not to be found in any contemporary roster of careful investigators, natural or social. On the contrary, Richard Whately (1785–1863), later Archbishop of Dublin, was a man more qualified for ecclesiastical preferment than balanced scientific judgment. Nevertheless, as the author of several popular books on logic, economics, and literary criticism,¹ there were few subjects on which he hesi-

¹ Richard Whately, *Introductory Lectures on Political Economy* (London, 1831); *On the Origin of Civilization* (London, 1855); *Miscellaneous Lectures and Reviews* (London, 1861).

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tated to express himself with conviction. And as a result, his opinions, though dull and ponderous, carried great weight in England during the forty-year period from 1820 to 1860. In fact, Cardinal Newman and John Stuart Mill acknowledged his influence, while W. Cooke Taylor dedicated a two-volume work on the natural history of society with 'reverential feelings' to His Grace.¹

Whately's indictment of contemporary savagery, on the whole a restatement in highly popular form of an argument used twenty-five years before (1832) in Oxford classes on economic theory, obtained wide circulation in 1857 in a cheap pamphlet reprint of a lecture, *On the Origin of Civilization*. This indictment contained two counts. One, assuming primitive man to be the product of a process of change the opposite of progression, denied him a place in the developmental series. The other, also at variance with current anthropological optimism, refused to allow him the potentiality for unassisted improvement.

Whately, in other words, following closely Niebuhr's (1776-1831) refutation of "ancient speculation on the progress of mankind",² endeavoured to confute those economists who, like Adam Smith,

¹ William Cooke Taylor, *The Natural History of Society in the Barbarian and Civilized State: An Essay Towards Discovering the Origin and Course of Human Improvement* (London, 1840).

² Barthold Georg Niebuhr, *The History of Rome*, tr. by J. C. Hare and Connop Thirlwall, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1828), p. 65.

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found in a theoretical group,¹ or pair,² of primordial savages, that state of society from which civilization had advanced. The Archbishop's argument started with a horrified, impressionistic picture of the savage as the defeated missionary saw him—gross, naked, ugly, ape-like, deserter of the aged, practiser of polygamy, perpetrator of infanticide and cannibalism.³ "Could this abandoned creature entertain any of the elements of nobility?" he asked. "Could the lowest savages and the most highly civilized specimens of the European races be regarded as members of the same species? Was it conceivable, as the great economist had asserted, that by the division of labour these shameless peoples could 'advance step by step in all the arts of civilized life'?"

The Archbishop's answer was an emphatic negative, which he supported in part by an assemblage of historical illustrations, in part by an appeal to tradition or pure conjecture. From his reading of history, he concluded that the origin of civilization could not be found in cultures similar to present primitive cultures because "there is no one instance recorded of any of them rising to a civilized state".⁴ Again, resting his case on the records of antiquity, he held that

¹ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 1 (New York, 1901), pp. 55-57.

² Adam Smith, "A Dissertation on the Origin of Languages," in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London, 1853), pp. 507-508.

³ Whately, *On the Origin of Civilization*, pp. 26-27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27, 30-31, 33.

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nations reported to have risen unaided from the savage state have been found in every instance to have had "the advantage of the instruction and example of civilized man living among them".¹ Finally, according to his reading of the accounts of missionaries and explorers, even instruction and example had sometimes failed to elevate the savage. Indeed, many native people who were known to have been in contact with Europeans for centuries had remained unchanged in their early condition of wretchedness.² The Archbishop's summary of this assemblage of evidence was that "all experience proves that men left (to themselves) in the lowest . . . degree of barbarism never did, and never can, raise themselves, unaided, in a higher civilization";³ that change in culture, far from being controlled by an irresistible law of progress, is on the contrary, in the case of present primitive peoples, to be described in the terms of decline and degeneration. For this conclusion the Archbishop found confirmation in the occasional savage legends reminiscent of an earlier and higher state, and the occasional presence within backward cultures of one or two arts, "not of apiece with their general rudeness". These he characterized as remnants of a more advanced condition.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴ Whately, *Introductory Lectures on Political Economy*, p. 76.

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Considering the bold and reasoned quality of anti-progressionist opinion before Whately's time, it is not easy to understand how proponents of better sustained theories of social degeneration could have been passed by unnoticed, while the Archbishop, with arguments in many respects infirm, exercised so much influence. But the fact remains that he did. The theory of the degeneracy of savagery, of which he was really only a minor prophet, became in the sixties associated exclusively with his name. Other degenerationists, such as W. Cooke Taylor, composed volumes¹ to support his position, assembling masses of evidence where the Archbishop had remained content with one illustration. In *Primeval Man*, the scriptural Duke of Argyll dismissed Whately's argument for the degeneration of savagery, but advanced one of his own taking its departure from "the indisputable fact that man is capable of Degradation."² Defenders of the eighteenth-century optimism appeared from all points of the intellectual compass. Books were reviewed in terms of Whately's contention.³ And social reformers everywhere, those good souls whose newly acquired compassion for the economically down-trodden had found a comfortable solvent in the notion of inevitable

¹ Taylor, as cited.

² George Douglas Campbell, Duke of Argyll, *Primeval Man: An Examination of Some Recent Speculations* (London, 1869), pp. 154-156.

³ Reviews of Kingsley's *Water Babies*, *Anthropological Review*, vol. 1 (1863), pp. 472-476; and Tylor's *Researches in the Early History of Mankind*, *Anthropological Review*, vol. 3 (1865), pp. 248-265.

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social improvement, viewed with alarm the practical outcome of the opposite view. "Is there a definite assured law of progress in human affairs—a slow, gradual ascent from the lower to the higher? . . . or was primeval man a developed and superior being who has retrograded and degenerated into the savage state? These are grave questions . . . of high practical interest; for, to know the fundamental law of movement in humanity, is the prerequisite of all wise and successful measures of social amelioration."¹

Even more disconcerted were those scholarly students of man's mind and culture whose personal and professional interests were vested in a methodology based upon the idea of progress. Many rushed into the controversy as it found its way in 1867 into the early sessions of the Section on Anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. So great was the public interest in the matter that the anti-Whatelean arguments at the Dundee meeting attracted an unusually large audience "composed of the very elite" of town society. At the following meeting in 1868, Sir John Lubbock's paper on the subject became the occasion of an extended discussion in which all the outstanding men in the field participated.² Men of science and learning felt com-

¹ John Lubbock, Lord Avebury, *Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man. Mental and Social Condition of Savages* (New York, 1871), p. iv.

² *Anthropological Review*, vol. 6 (1868), pp. 84-86; vol. 7 (1869), pp. 415-423.

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elled to assemble material to demonstrate the unsoundness of Whately's position. As a public-spirited parliamentarian jealous for human destiny, Lubbock confessed to the fear that "if the past history of man has been one of deterioration, we have but groundless expectation of future improvement."¹ Again as an archæologist, he endeavoured to restore modern savages to the good graces of European opinion by asserting that there was "no evidence of any general degradation" among them, and that the most horrible customs were often actually the outcome of a belief in a future state or some equally good motive. He refused to deny that there were cases in which nations had retrograded, but he regarded them as exceptional instances.

Though often and capably answered, Whately's formulation of anti-progressionist opinion has never become wholly a dead-letter among social theories. In 1871 it withstood the criticism of Charles Darwin, who affirmed that the arguments offered by the Archbishop and the Duke of Argyll were "weak in comparison with those advanced by the other side".² In 1880, after a thorough review of the evidence, it was partially revived by Arthur Mitchell.³ The question was debated anew by Andrew Lang in

¹ Lubbock, as cited, p. 323.

² Charles Robert Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (2nd ed., London, 1913), p. 221.

³ Mitchell, as cited, pp. 201-216.

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1887,¹ and reconsidered by Gummere in 1901.² As recently as 1922 in one of his rare excursions into the discussion of method, Frazer was still sufficiently impressed by the importance of the problem to say that "the old theory of the progressive degeneracy of mankind in general from a primitive state of virtue and perfection is destitute of even a rag of evidence. Even the more limited and tenable view that certain races have partially degenerated rests, I think, on a very narrow induction. . . . I have met with few facts which point clearly and undubitably to racial degeneracy."³ And again, ten years later, in 1932 an American archæologist found it necessary to defend a Central American people from the same old imputation. "It is easy . . . to speak of the present Maya as 'a degenerate people,'" said he. "The common Maya have 'degenerated' in giving up ancient gods and taking up Christian saints . . . in the same way in which our North European ancestors 'degenerated' when they ceased to be pagan barbarians and took over Mediterranean culture."⁴

It is plain, after looking over the roster of those who attempted to meet Whately's arguments, that Edward

¹ Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, vol. 2 (London, 1913), pp. 346-347.

² Francis Barton Gummere, *The Beginning of Poetry* (New York, 1901), pp. 15-16.

³ James George Frazer, "The Scope and Method of Mental Anthropology," *Science Progress*, vol. 16 (1921-1922), pp. 582-583.

⁴ Robert Redfield, "Maya Archæology as the Mayas see it," *Sociologus*, vol. 8 (1932), p. 305.

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Burnett Tylor's (1832-1917) was the only mind in that able circle aghast at the implications of parochial ethnology which perceived a way out of the dilemma. As one of the vice-presidents of the Section on Anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Tylor was present during the debates. He undoubtedly shared the anxiety of others who laboured to retain the idea of progress as an organizing principle in the study of man. Nevertheless, an inspection of his work reveals that he was not content with merely logical rebuttal. He alone, among his immediate contemporaries, endeavoured to assemble the literature on the theory of the degeneration of savagery. He alone seemed to realize that if the eighteenth-century humanistic interpretation of Cartesianism was to be sustained—if, in the last analysis, civilization was to be proved the product of orderly, slow, gradual, continuous, and progressive motion or change from an original state similar to that of contemporary savagery, the evidences of its lowly origin must be found in civilization itself. As a result of his efforts, the cultural materials designated as survivals have come to form the subject matter of folklore, one of the most important and well-tilled areas of humanistic inquiry. Two generations of scholarship have regarded descriptions of the process of survival as adequate explanations of the longevity either of culture as a whole, or of certain types of

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culture elements. The doctrine is persistently employed as a conceptual tool when problems involving the otherwise undocumented past are set up for solution.

THE REHABILITATION OF DEVELOPMENTALISM

I

THE claim of Edward Burnett Tylor to the attention of nineteenth-century students of man is often said to rest upon his theory of the animistic origin of religion, his concept of cultural adhesions, and his doctrine of survivals. By the historian of method, however, the doctrine of survivals, evoked as the terminating episode in an intellectual impasse which bade fair to destroy the foundations of developmentalism, must be regarded as the most important and far-reaching.

Nevertheless, Tylor's formulation of the doctrine, his demonstration that "the civilized mind bears traces of a past condition from which savages represent the least, and civilized man the greatest advance" was far from clear. In fact, although it received its final statement in *Primitive Culture*, it can be fully recovered only by assembling vague statements scattered throughout this work and the pages of earlier essays. Brought into some sort of order, these seem to assert that "among the evidence aiding us to trace the course which the civilization of the world has actually followed, is the the great class of facts to denote which I have found it convenient to introduce the term

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‘survivals’. These are processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried by force of habit into a new society . . . and . . . thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has evolved.”¹ There are “thousands of cases of this kind which have become, so to speak, landmarks in the course of culture.”² The serious business of ancient society may be seen to sink into the spirit of later generations, and its serious belief to linger on in nursery folk-lore.³ An idea, the meaning of which has perished for ages, may continue to exist, simply because it has existed.”⁴ Lingering intellectual crochets, old wives’ tales, and peasant superstitions, often dwindled “transformed, shifted, or mutilated, . . . still carry their history plainly stamped upon them ”⁵ and are “full of meaning to those who can decipher their signs ”.⁶ The opinions drawn from old or worn-out culture are not to be left lying “where they were shaped ”,⁷ but may be used “to declare that the civilization of the people they are observed among must have been derived from an earlier state . . . and thus collections of such facts are to be worked as mines of historical knowledge ”.⁸

¹ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1 (7th edn., New York), p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 71. ³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 16, 113; vol. 2, p. 181.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 71-72.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 17; vol. 2, pp. 16-17, 34, 214.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 21, 94.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 158-159.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 71.

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A few later students have endeavoured to improve upon Tylor's tenuous and fragmentary definition by identifying this category of traits more closely with the 'non-official' culture, or with the mental activities of the rural, unlettered classes.¹ Some have emphasized the analogy between certain old ideas and archæological,² or geological³ remains. Others have stressed the likeness between outworn culture elements and the functionless structures of living organisms.⁴ Still others have defined cultural survivals as practices or ideas logically outside the ordinary trend of thought, unsupported by belief,⁵ and persisting in isolation from their original cultural context.⁶ But on the whole their efforts, like Tylor's, were figurative rather than objective, and the idea they sought to clarify has never been entirely emancipated from the realm of metaphor.

It is commonly assumed that in formulating this

¹ Charlotte Sophia Burne, "The Essential Unity of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore*, vol. 22 (1911), pp. 16, 20-21.

² George Laurence Gomme, "Folk-lore," in *Hastings's Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 6 (1914), p. 59.

³ Andrew Lang, *Modern Mythology* (London, 1897), p. viii.

⁴ Stanley Arthur Cook, "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, E. C. Quiggen, editor (Cambridge, 1913), *passim*.

⁵ George Henderson, *Survivals in Belief Among the Celts* (Glasgow, 1911), pp. 1-2.

⁶ Robert H. Lowie, *Culture and Ethnology* (New York, 1917), p. 83; Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology* (18th ed., London, 1897), p. 396; G. L. Gomme, *Folk-lore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908), p. 319. See also W. H. R. Rivers' definition of the survival as that type of culture element whose "nature cannot be explained by its present utility but only becomes intelligible through its past history," in "Survival in Sociology," *Sociological Review*, vol. 4 (1913), p. 295.

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important doctrine Tylor followed a procedure too often invoked by students of man and imported a biological concept into social inquiry. Darwin's terminology is similar and his slight priority in publication lends plausibility to the assumption. Analysis, however, relieves Tylor of the imputation; for the biologist and anthropologist were dealing not only with different materials but also with different problems.

Darwin's attention in the *Origin of Species* was directed toward living things whose present variety was currently ascribed to change and the appearance of the organically new. The successful variation, which, according to his theory results in the appearance of a new species, was obviously incorporated in a living unit made up of a multitude of old elements. Strictly speaking, the stability of these old organic elements in the presence of the competitive struggle was a phenomenon as interesting as the viability of the new. But the form in which Darwin stated his problem freed him from the necessity of dealing with the old.¹ Consequently, when he appealed to the idea of survival in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, it was in the interests of the problem of the new.

Tylor's attention, on the other hand, was directed

¹ Except in the form of rudimentary organs, a concept which was derived, at least in part, from the same social study, namely philology, to which Tylor was in part indebted for his concept of survivals. See Charles Robert Darwin, *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (2d edn., 1913), pp. 16, 18, 23, 36, 137-138.

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not toward living things but toward human culture. Equally interested in the problems of change and the new in cultural terms, his attack was less direct than that of Darwin. Old culture elements, particularly old ideas and practices for whose preservation no satisfactory explanation had been offered, obtruded themselves. He was compelled by circumstances, which had no parallel in the history of biological thought, to apportion some effort to the study of this problem. Hence, while the concept of survival solved a problem for Darwin, and referred to the living, the new, organically fit, appropriate, consistent and harmonious, survival in culture remained for Tylor a problem to be solved, and referred to the non-living, the old, the culturally unfit, inappropriate, inconsistent and illogical.

If not to biology, where then did the great anthropologist go for his tools of thought? He himself quoted Auguste Comte as saying that "no conception whatever can be understood except through its history". What is the history of the idea of survivals? The answer is suggested in the work of historians and developmentalists who professed to find 'traces' of archaic or primitive activities in present civilization and in McLennan's use of 'symbols'.¹ It is also to be found in Tylor's early training in geology and archæology, in his persistent reading of the extensive

¹ For discussion of McLennan, see Chapter III, pp. 90-95.

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literature of classical and modern antiquarianism, and in the influence on him of the romantic effort to clothe the vulgar culture of the rural masses with the authentic values of antiquity.

As for Tylor, it will be remembered that, like many other nineteenth-century students of social phenomena, he accomplished some of his most distinguished work while still a young man in his thirties, and reached conclusions in the study of man on the basis of training and interest in relatively alien fields. Under his brother's influence he became, for a youth, somewhat better than an amateur geologist. In 1856, at the age of twenty-four, he read Humboldt and travelled in Mexico with the geologist-antiquarian, Henry Christy. The influence of these two men may easily be observed in his first publication, a book on his Mexican travels.¹ In it he carefully checks his own observations of Aztec irrigation systems, temples, sculpture and stone weapons against those made by innumerable other observers. But to descriptions of geological formations, archæological remains and collections of antiquities, Tylor adds, even in his early work, something of his own, namely, a keen interest in popular rites, peasant festivals and the persistent character of old customs, all of which came to be considered later the material of the science of folk-lore.²

¹ *Anahuac: or Mexico and the Mexicans, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1861).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51, 85-87, 100-101.

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The elements out of which a later concept of survivals was to be constructed appeared early in Tylor's work and were derived from these varied fields of interest. In *Anahuac*, the juxtaposition of old and new in culture was remarked, together with the surprising failure of the efficient new to supplant the inefficient old. Repeated efforts were made in succeeding publications to isolate the old for inspection, to characterize it and to find a place for it in the solution of current ethnological problems.

In the presence of the Whatelean controversy, these early interests were continued with renewed zest on his return to England. For it was plain to the young man that the degeneration theory obstructed the application of the comparative method. To Tylor, the Archbishop's theory "practically resolved itself into two assumptions, first, that the history of culture began with the appearance on earth of a semi-civilized race of men, and second, that from this stage culture has proceeded in two ways, backward to produce savages, and forward to produce civilized men. . . ."¹ If, as Whately maintained, backward peoples were themselves the product of a process the opposite of development, not only was the first step in the application of the comparative method blocked and the construction of a progressive series precluded, but the envisagement of social change in terms of the

¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, p. 35.

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idea of progress was prohibited. To restore to European thought its faith in progress, primitive peoples must be shown to fall into their appropriate initiatory position in the developmental series.

Confronted with this problem, Tylor's knowledge of prehistoric archaeology and folk-lore gave him access to two bodies of material. The first was composed of weapons, tools, and bits of pottery "garnered in the grave, chance found amid lacustrine deposits and peat mosses", associated with the lives of human beings who had lived in various northern European areas in the unrecorded and forgotten past. Once these "private hoards of nick-nackets"¹ had been assembled in museums and distinguished from the remains of Roman invaders, their classification and arrangement into the evidence for three or more prehistoric stages was rapid and convincing. The work of Thomsen, Boucher de Perthes, Worsaae and others was fresh in the minds of all ethnologists. The second body of material was composed of the strange practices, inexplicable beliefs and irrational ideas of people living in the present. These phenomena, however, had not been handled with any degree of success. In fact, they had not been approached from the standpoint of social or any other science.²

¹ Daniel Wilson, *Pre-historic Annals of Scotland*, vol. 1 (2nd ed. London, 1863), pp. 20-21.

² Except in the field of mythology. Andrew Lang offers a brief history of ancient and modern efforts to account for the irrational element in myths in his *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (London, 1887), ch. 1.

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It was well known by more acute observers of human behaviour that men, in every other way like themselves, entertained superstitions, or what were called for lack of a better term 'intellectual crochets'¹ "nonsensical and stupid opinions",² and "fond and foolish customs"; that explanations of phenomena which were untenable to the thinking man were widely accepted; that practices were maintained and rites observed which were out of keeping with modern thought. Furthermore, these quaint and wayward rites of intellectual and cultural flotsam, like ancient coins or shards of pottery, had long been of interest to the collector and had been written down, classified, and contemplated "as a fashionable study".

From the earliest times, indeed, the old in culture, that material which in Tylor's hands acquired documentary importance, had been associated with the assumed conservatism of various social groups and levels. Thucydides, for example, regarded members of the upper and wealthier levels of the Greek community as the most tenacious adherents of old ideas and customs; and he sought to prove that "the ancient Greeks lived in a manner similar to the barbarians of the [his] present age" because certain old and well-to-do men still bound up "a knot of hair on their heads with a tie of golden grasshoppers".³

¹ Tylor, as cited, vol. 2, pp. 16-17.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 94.

³ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, tr. by Henry Dale, (New York, 1891), I. 6.

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Cicero, on the other hand, maintained that old women, the vulgar and illiterate were the last to abandon old practices for new.¹ On the basis of similar reasoning, the antiquarians who flourished in classical antiquity preserved long lists of children's games and collected the superstitions of the common people.² The Church fathers, much of whose missionary enterprise was conducted among country people, associated the persistence of ancient religious beliefs and rituals with the agricultural classes. In fact, the source of the association of the old in culture with the lower orders of society is probably to be sought in the history of administrative embarrassment which for religious, civil and industrial statesmen, long bisected European society into an urban minority hospitable to change and a rural mass which resisted the new.³ At all events the early missionaries refer frequently to the unwillingness of the vulgar to forsake their pagan gods. The church of the middle ages bewailed the fact that "the masse . . . hathe more affinity with grosse Gentilisme than with the Institution of Our Saviour Christ". Ecclesiastical administrators made provision

¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Of the Nature of the Gods* (London, 1775), pp. 65, 83, 207-8.

² William Reginald Halliday, *Greek and Roman Folk-lore* (London, 1927), *passim*.

³ John Linton Myres, "Herodotus and Anthropology," in *Anthropology and the Classics*, edited by R. R. Marett (Oxford, 1918), pp. 165-167.

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for the transmission of the newer Christian doctrine by issuing hand-books to artists¹ and priests² instructing them in the technique of habituating the unlettered masses to the new by constant doctrinal repetition in church ornament, symbol and ceremonial. The age of the crusades saw the rise of a peculiar type of allegorical literature, called *exempla*, which in persuasive form conveyed the basic truths of an alien, ethical idea-system to an illiterate peasantry and an equally illiterate nascent bourgeoisie.³ A like effort to correlate developmental levels in art-forms with social status was fostered throughout the Middle Ages. Tragedy was declared to be the imitation of the lives and speech of heroes and aristocrats, and seldom permitted the introduction of humble folk or common deeds, while comedy concerned itself with the tricks and knaveries of serving men and low fellows.⁴ In the empire of poetic expression, the epic was associated with the heroic and noble, the ballad with the ignorant and rustic.⁵ The practitioners of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century medicine, asserting with Bacon that "the master of superstition is the

¹ Vincent de Beauvais (d. 1264), *Speculum Universale*.

² Guillaume Durand, *Rationale Divinarum Officiorum* (1286).

³ Alexander H. Krappe, *The Science of Folk-lore* (New York, 1930), p. 50.

⁴ J. C. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (4th ed., London, 1898), p. 134, note 2; pp. 374-375, 380, 479-481. See also V. F. Calverton, *The Newer Spirit: A Sociological Criticism of Literature* (New York, 1925), pp. 25-29.

⁵ F. B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (Boston, 1907), p. 1.

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people",¹ collected and denounced the 'vulgar errors' of folk-therapeutics.² Collectors of "popular antiquities" in the same century searched the same social levels for nurses' fables, boys' games, and the indications of pagan or popish past. Aubrey³ and Bourne,⁴ like Sir Thomas Browne with his Roman burial urns and other antiquarians with their coins, characterized old wives' tales and village superstitions as 'remains', 'vestiges', and 'relics'. Educated commentators viewed the repudiated beliefs and rituals of the ignorant and rural somewhat as Bacon described the remains of classical antiquity, as "history defaced, or remnants that have escaped the shipwreck of time."⁵ In the *Leviathan*, published in 1651, Thomas Hobbes ascribed the current sovereignty of superstition to the persistence of "reliques of gentilism", such as the worship of images and idols, among those studied "nothing but their food and ease". Following the same line of argument, the deists of the eighteenth century combed contemporary

¹ Francis Bacon, "Of superstition," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, edited by J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath, vol. 12 (Boston, 1902), p. 136.

² For example see Laurent Joubert, *Paradoxa medica* (Lyon, 1586); *Erreures populaires touchant la médecine* (Bordeaux, 1578); James Primrose, *De vulgi erroribus in medicina* (Amsterdam, 1630); Thomas Browne, *Pseudoxia epidemica: or, inquiries into very many received tenets and commonly presumed truths* (London, 1646).

³ John Aubrey, *Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme* (1668-87), edited and annotated by J. Britten (London, 1881).

⁴ Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates vulgares* (1725), in John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (Newcastle, 1777).

⁵ Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (New York, 1901), p. 103.

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religious thought and practice for the evidences of the persistence of paganism.¹ John Brand, with a later and firmer grasp on the concept of the material and non-material in culture, remarked with finality that "vulgar rites and popular opinions . . . are mutilated and, as in the remains of ancient statuary, the parts of not a few have been awkwardly transposed; they preserve, however, the principal traits that distinguish them in their origin. Things composed of such flimsy materials as the fancies of a multitude do not seem

¹ See, for example, "A letter from Rome, showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism," in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late and Revered and Learned Conyers Middleton*, vol. 3 (London, 1752), pp. 1-132.

A very large body of the nineteenth-century literature using the Tyloorean terminology of survivals is a modern manifestation of this peculiar deistic interest. In it no effort is made in the Tyloorean tradition to arrive at origins or to uphold the presuppositions of developmentalism. On the contrary, students restrict themselves to the collection and enumeration of the evidences in contemporary European religion of the persistence of pagan or popish practices.

See as examples John James Blunt, *Vestiges of Ancient Manners and Customs, Discoverable in Modern Italy and Sicily* (London, 1823). C. G. Seligman, "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in E. C. Quiggin, editor, *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 448-457. Slade Butler, "Greek Mysteries in the Gospel Narrative," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 57 (1905), pp. 490-499. L. R. Farnell, "The Presence of Savage Elements in the Religion of Cultured Races," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. 12 (1913-1914), pp. 804-818. L. J. B. Bérenger-Féraud, "Contribution a l'étude des pratiques religieuses de l'antiquité chez les Provençaux de nos jours," *Bulletins de la Société d'Ethnographie de Paris*, 4^e série, vol. 2 (1891), pp. 305-312. Edwin H. A. Tylor, *Primitivism in Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*, edited by M. Fairnairn (New York, 1888). Paul Sébillot, *Le Paganisme Contemporaine chez les peuples Celto-Latin* (Paris, 1908). J. Nippgen, "La Persistence du Paganisme dans les Régions Balkaniques," *Revue Anthropologique*, vol. 35 (1925), pp. 176-189. George Henderson, *Survivals of Primitive Religion Among the Celts* (Glasgow, 1911). J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folk-lore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (Cambridge, 1910).

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calculated for a long duration, yet have these survived shocks, by which even Empires have been overthrown, and preserved at least some Form and Colour of Identity, during a repetition or Changes, both in religious Opinions, and in the Policy of States.”¹

In short, antiquarians were convinced that superstitions or irrational ideas and practices were among the older elements of non-material culture and bore a relationship to the lives of human beings who lived in the past. They felt that they were existing results of some process of cultural preservation; and that, in the case of folk-tales, folk-dances, burial rites, and similar practices, they had been transmitted by some form of folk-memory. But until Tylor appeared, the question of advancing beyond the romantic, observational, and collecting stage in dealing with them had not been broached. Their illogical and anomalous position within the culture pattern set up a preliminary problem of such magnitude that no one felt able either to account for it, or, having accounted for it, to pass on to the utilization of the material in the further study of man. The very irrationality which attracted

¹ Brand, as cited, pp. iii-ix. For other possible sources of the doctrine of survivals see discussion of the use of the ballad for purposes of historical reconstruction in Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, vol. 1 (London, 1919) pp. 240 ff. A. W. Benn, *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (New York), pp. 314 ff.; discussion of the wearing-out principle in language in William Dwight Whitney, *Language and the Study of Language* (New York, 1868), pp. 80, 100; and Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (New York, 1913), pp. 1-36.

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attention of collectors of the quaint all but alienated the interest of the scholar.

But when Tylor, in need of an argument to defeat degenerationism, was brought face to face with the excavated artifacts of the archæologist and the superstitious practices of the common people, comparison and identification became possible. Arresting similarities between the two bodies of human material suggested a means not only of reconciling their differences but also of confirming his belief in the validity of the theory of development. Both were useless, inconsistent, and out of harmony with contemporary culture. No Britisher in the sixties would have relied for self-defence on a chipped flint arrowhead. Although strange gods were occasionally invoked at British wells and decisions rendered by the key and the book, those who appealed to such non-orthodox and extra-legal devices regarded them as ends in themselves; as folk-ways which were as unrelated to current need and statute as was the arrowhead to the high-powered rifle. Nevertheless, the excavated arrowhead, while of no use to the man in the street, was of surpassing utility to the student of the past. As found it was often a fragment. It had obviously undergone many vicissitudes of weather and soil. But it had plainly been fashioned by an earlier human hand and could have served an earlier man in time of need. Given a small piece, the archæologist could not only

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recover the outline of the original implement, but with its help could imaginatively reconstruct much of the life and culture of the men to whom it was once a necessary means of self-preservation.

With these facts in mind, Tylor the archæologist gave Tylor the collector of popular antiquities his assistance. Together they were enabled *conceptually* to lift the inexplicable, irrational, inconsistent, and anomalous in present advanced non-material culture out of its incongruous modern matrix; to account for it in terms of strips and tatters,¹ cultural fragmentation or decay,² mutilation³ or dwindling;⁴ and more important, to employ it for purposes of documenting prehistoric and savage culture. For although the effort to restore conceptually the prehistoric form of a 'mutilated' belief might be more difficult than the recovery of the original outlines of a fragment of ancient earthenware, once that restoration was made, the collector of ancient opinions had only one next step to take, the identification of the assumed prehistoric condition with the actual condition in contemporary savagery.

The doctrine of survivals is to be clearly ap-

¹ E. B. Tylor, "On Traces of the Early Mental Condition of Man," *Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, vol. 5 (1866-69), p. 93.

² Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 2, pp. 136-137.

³ Tylor, "The Religion of Savages," *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 6 (1866), pp. 71-86.

⁴ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, pp. 78, 136-137.

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prehended, in fact, not from Tylor's definition in *Primitive Culture* but only when it is realized that the idea was derived from three fields of inquiry, the materials of which were either already acknowledged as documents and used for the reconstruction of the past; or, by their rating as old, were being placed on a documentary footing. Tylor, in formulating the doctrine, was indebted, in the first instance, to geologists and archæologists who, with little more than fossilized bones and shards of pottery, had achieved widely heralded success in reconstructing early forms of animal life and primeval periods of culture. He was beholden also to ethnologists, who had established a claim of great age and persistence for savage culture. He derived final support from the romantic antiquarians, whose repudiation of the values of urban civilization had not only enveloped shepherd, ploughman, and milkmaid in a rosy mist of sentiment, but had also dignified village festivals, rustic dances, ballads, and old wives' tales with that ultimate badge of honour, the attribute of great antiquity.

Tylor's mind, confronted with the need for evidence of the perpetuation among civilized men of practices similar to those of existing savages, became a crucible for the compounding of mental constructs from these several fields. When in him the archæologist and folklorist combined, the mutilation of pre-historic artifact and the irrationality of rural rite were identified as

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imperfections of the same order, defects arising from the erosion of time; and meaningless peasant practices were invested with the documentary significance already ascribed to ruined wall, burial urn, and fossil. When again in him, folk-lorist and ethnologist fused, village culture was accepted not only as ancestral to advanced civilization, but, in its turn, as the legatee of savagery. Over the shoulder of the countryman peered the strikingly similar visage of the savage. The assumption was suggested that folk-culture fulfilled the function of a transmitting middle term, handing on to civilized culture traits like those of contemporary primitive people.

With these associations woven into the doctrine of survivals, Tylor was enabled not only to identify the practices of living rustics with those of living savages, but to endow both with the endurance and documentary import of archaeological materials. He was enabled to vindicate the comparative method and to reinstate primitive man in the progressive series. He succeeded in restoring the hope of humanitarians in inevitable social amelioration. He sent the humanist back to his materials with a new body of documents for the reconstruction of the past, and a new procedure for focusing them to an old and congenial end.

In short, whenever it has been found desirable by subsequent investigators to account for the contemporary existence of ideas or actions bearing a more

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logical, significant, and harmonious relationship to earlier systems of ideas or culture, these illogical and inharmonious 'misfits', thanks to Tylor, have been called survivals. Whenever, lacking dated historical material, it has become desirable to sketch a prehistoric way of life, survivals have been assembled to form, together with archæological data, the historian's palette of colours.

II

Tylor was the author of over two hundred and fifty papers and five books.¹ All were of singularly high and even quality. All manifest an alert interest in the wide array of difficult problems confronting mid-century ethnology and anthropology. His work was early remarked for the penetration with which he recognized materials hitherto unknown or neglected,² and the originality with which they were employed. Nevertheless, the reader cannot avoid the conclusion that the force and vigour of his work is derived from the emotional zest with which he entered the lists against the degenerationists. This is particularly true of his two great treatises, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (1865)

¹ Barbara W. Freire-Marreco, "A Bibliography of Edward Burnett Tylor," in *Anthropological Essays Presented to Edward Burnett Tylor in Honour of his 75th Birthday, Oct. 2, 1907*, edited by N. W. Thomas (Oxford, 1907), pp. 375-409.

² Tylor, "Report on Researches into the Early History of Mankind," *Anthropological Review*, vol. 3 (1865), p. 248

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and *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (1871). Furthermore, it is clear that Tylor was familiar from the first with the raw materials with which the doctrine of survivals was to be constructed. The analogy between archaeological finds and the rural antiquities collected by such men as Aubrey, Bourne, and Brand was drawn in some of his earliest papers. But this doctrine was not the only means invoked to rescue the idea of progress as an organizing principle in research, from the attacks of theologians, politicians, missionaries and satirists. Indeed, the possibilities of three other arguments were first carefully explored. One proceeded from an examination of the character of the evidence advanced by Whately in support of his position. Another had as its immediate objective the discovery among existing human beings of a group which could be intercalated in the evolutionary series above the apes but below the rudest savages. While still another took its departure from an analysis of the evidence for the original diversity or uniformity of the human mind.

Whately's indictment of contemporary savages contained two counts. One rejected them as products of degeneration from the developmental series. The other denied them the power of unassisted improvement. With reference to the latter position it was Tylor's contention, and one followed in laborious per-

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sonal practice, that more profitable work could be done by collecting data than by spinning theories. He objected to the Archbishop's construction of sweeping generalizations on the foundation of one or two unchecked facts. Said the scientist to the divine, "If self-improvement is to be denied to the savage, the least that can be asked is that a good number of cases of tribes who have had a fair trial under favourable circumstances and have been found wanting."¹ In the Archbishop's disregard of some of the more obvious rules of evidence, the anthropologist, therefore, found cause for criticism of which he was not slow to avail himself. The theologian was successfully convicted of violating the context of a passage in Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle*, and of wilfully suppressing statements which would have weakened the case for the degenerationists. Whately's statement that primitive man could improve only after contact was described as a speculation reached "in beautiful ease" without supporting data.

It was plain to Tylor, furthermore, that a verdict in favour of the progressionists could never be reached if the missionary's conception of primitive culture was permitted to prevail among scientists. Throughout his work he repeatedly deprecated the want of liberal judgment among the clergy at home and overseas. He regretted their lack of generosity in estimating the

¹ Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (New York, 1878), p. 161.

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attainment of non-European man. He deplored their inclination to sneer at what they did not take the trouble to understand. He was convinced that the clerical scale of cultural values could not be accepted as the basis of ethnological study, and he tried to neutralize Whately's stern condemnation of savage vices by drawing up a friendlier catalogue of their moral virtues. The Archbishop was reminded somewhat tartly that even the culture of Europe, which he had made the capstone of human achievement, was not always virtuous. According to Tylor, civilization might very well mean that men have merely "learned to give poison secretly and effectually . . . have raised a corrupt literature to pestilent perfection . . . have organized a successful scheme to arrest free inquiry and proscribe free expression."¹

Tylor's second argument against the degenerationists was embodied in a short paper entitled *Wild Men and Beast Children*² and seems to have been borrowed from that side of a current controversy over the negro's place in nature which resisted the relegation of the black man to a separate species. Unmoved by racial and economic prejudices, Tylor had no desire to degrade a backward people. He wished, on the contrary, to refute theologians and European exploiters by finding evidence that all primitive peoples, includ-

¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, p. 28.

² *Anthropological Review*, vol. 1 (1863), pp. 21-33.

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ing negroes, were already in a state of advancement over a semi-human group still lower in the scale. In order to achieve this purpose he appealed characteristically to the materials with which he had begun to familiarize himself, namely, the folk-lore and myths of men living as beasts among beasts, and of children nurtured by animals. But when these were weighed and sifted, he was forced to the reluctant conclusion that the evidence proved nothing "except the existence of the stories . . . and . . . of people who believed them."¹ Whately still remained unanswered.

It was plain to Tylor, furthermore, that raw facts, no matter how numerous, had no theoretical value without arrangement and utilization with reference to the central, unsolved problem of social development, namely, the original diversity or similarity of the human mind. If, at last, the facts supported the assumption of original mental differences, a view widely held at the moment among ethnologists swayed by the arguments of pro-slavery agitators, the cause of the progressionists was lost. Men and cultures might be subject either to advance or decline. If, on the other hand, the data supported the assumption of original unity, equality, and similarity, primitive man, like European man, bore in him a common human capacity for self-improvement. Those of Tylor's predecessors who, like him, were committed to an optimistic

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1 (1863), p. 32.

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view of man's past and future, had been content with amassing likenesses in culture in order to prove similarity of mind. Tylor, more discerning, realized that the accumulation of illustrations would never constitute proof. Correspondence in custom did not necessarily arise from correspondence in origin. It was clear that the obvious likenesses between the activities of present primitive peoples and the peoples living in the early stages of historical or European cultures might be due to borrowing, in which case the progressionists were again unsupported. It was possible, on the contrary, that like practices and ideas were due to common inheritance or independent invention, in which case the cause of the progressionists was safe.

Tylor's first important book entitled, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization*, published when he was thirty-three years of age, is composed, therefore, of essays which address themselves to various aspects of this matter. For two reasons it is a milestone in anthropological thought. It contains the long overdue three-fold division of the problem of similarities. It also formulates the result of a first tilling of "great masses" of material on the "early history of man" which had "long been forthcoming" but had as yet been turned to little account.¹

¹ Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, p. 2.

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It had been the well-established habit of ethnologists to seek solutions of human problems in terms of anatomical description and physical comparison of peoples. But physical anthropologists, antiquarians, archæologists, collectors of folkways and ballads, mythologists, philologists and students of comparative religions had pursued their separate ways, out of touch with each other and with ethnology. Although not the first to lay several of these latter studies under tribute, Tylor is notable for the mastery which he secured over their literatures. In the *Researches*, he drew heavily on his philological studies. The examination of similarities is carried on in terms of gesture language, picture writing, and, to a lesser extent, archæological materials. As a result of this inspection he came to the conclusion that if "the similar thing has been produced in two places by independent invention then . . . it is direct evidence of the similarity of (the primitive) mind (everywhere, at all times). And on the other hand, if it is carried from one place to another . . . then the smallness of the change it has suffered in transplanting is still evidence of the like nature of the soil (or mind) wherever found."¹ In short, similarity of custom, whether due to invention, inheritance, or borrowing, strongly suggested to Tylor the similarity of the inventing or borrowing minds, and supplied added data for

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 373 (parenthetical explanations are added to Tylor's text).

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meeting the arguments of the degenerationists. The *Researches*, assuming its conclusions to be unassailable, thus reinstated the savage in the progressive series.

Tylor, however, was too well aware of the difficulties involved in arriving at the sources of similarities to be satisfied with his case as it stood. He began immediately upon the construction of a new argument based upon still newer materials. The plan of this argument was designed to uphold primitive man in his restored status. He had been endowed with mental qualities similar or equal to European man; it was now to be maintained that he was modern man's cultural ancestor, whose ideas and practices had been handed on and cherished in a direct line. In *Primitive Culture* Tylor finally appealed to the doctrine of survivals.

It should be noted, however, that in assembling evidence of the persistence of savage culture in the midst of civilization, Tylor made a decision of crucial importance for subsequent thought. Although not unmindful of the fixity in an *unchanged* form of many old elements, these were disregarded for purposes of reconstructing the past. He referred to them as negligible illustrations of "mere permanence in culture".¹ Under the influence of his archæological and geological training, his attention was captured by

¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, p. 70.

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ideas and *practices* which, like the *archæological* fragments, seemed to him to bear the scars of history in their present 'dwindled' or 'mutilated' condition. He preferred to collect *survivals*, materials which presented indications of the loss of utility through change, wear and tear, or displacement. He felt that the obviously irrational and useless could be contemplated with less distraction than other old elements which formed a more significant part of "those seething problems of the day on which action has to be taken amid ferment and sharp strife". He believed that the ethnographer's course "should be like that of the anatomist who carries on his studies on dead rather than on living subjects."¹

With this distinction in mind, *Primitive Culture*, which appeared in 1871, and the two papers, which preceded it, were drafted manifestly to carry out the programme of *apprehending old ideas as old artifacts*. But the use made of the doctrine of survivals differs in the two papers. In the first, *On Traces of the Early Mental Condition of Man*,² "old notions in a modified condition" are employed as clues to the past, and a trial reconstruction of the early mental state of man is attempted. In the second, *On the Survival of Savage Thought in Modern Civilization*,³ interest in such reconstruction of an earlier state is temporarily

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 158.

² *Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, vol. 5 (1866-69), pp. 83-93.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 5 (1866-69), pp. 522-535.

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dismissed and the problem inverted. The doctrine of survivals is invoked in order to explain phenomena in the present which had hitherto been inexplicable.

Primitive Culture, an expansion of the two preceding papers, is the mature statement of a seasoned scholar. In it Tylor wisely chose to return for review to his original problem, progression *versus* degradation, and to the arguments for each side of the controversy. Although he remained convinced that "the main tendency of culture from primeval up to modern times" was from savagery to civilization,¹ he acknowledged other modes of connection such as degeneration, survival and revival.² He also admitted the possibility that degeneration might operate more actively in lower than in higher cultures.³

But he met Whately's strongest argument for degradation, the absence of historical evidence for an unaided transition from savage to advanced culture, with a liberalized definition of the materials to be admitted as testimony. He deplored the reliance of students of man upon the speculations of historians and the tales of travellers in the new world. He pleaded for the exploration and study of philology, archæology and "old traditional folk-lore". In support of this plea, he pointed out that the study of philology had already brought out the "undesigned history of language". He reminded his readers that

¹ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1, p. 21. ² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 46.

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archæology not only displayed the "old structures and buried records of the past", but did so with such force and convergence of testimony that the theory of degeneration was resisted rather than required.¹

In practice Tylor, himself, made little use of the data of archæology in *Primitive Culture* except as a guide to the theory of development illustrated by the serial arrangement of artifacts.² Language is discussed as a means of sustaining the right of primitive peoples to a place in the series. Its treatment, however, gives it secondary importance and contains much repetition from the *Researches*. His most vigorous efforts were concentrated upon the virgin territory of folk-lore which, though undated, was regarded as susceptible to sequential treatment. He concentrated his attention upon the search for existing but outworn practices and ideas which could be traced to an early stage of advanced culture and paralleled with similar elements in the cultures of existing savages.

Nevertheless, in choosing survivals with which to demonstrate the value of this procedure, he made no attempt to be exhaustive. Following the example of the collectors of ancient and medieval vulgar antiquities, he gave first attention to the pastimes of children, nurses' fables, games of chance, riddles, proverbs, the arts of divination and the obviously quaint. In children's games were to be found, accord-

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 42, 53, 61.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 68.

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ing to the doctrine, a record dwindled to sportive survivals, of the playful imitation by little savages of the serious and often warlike activities of their elders.¹ Arts of divination, gambling games, and traditional sayings were to be regarded as documents, broken down or faded by time, by which primitive man's philosophical system might be recovered. But owing, in part, to the theological source of the attacks on progressionism, in part, to the relatively untapped reservoirs of material on religious practices, Tylor's major work was done in this field. Myths were scrutinized for their underlying principles, savage rituals were analysed to "find the deeper motive which underlies them", and "the fundamental animism of the lower races" was traced in broken but developing outline "into the higher regions of civilization".

Thus Tylor reached the conclusion, so important to succeeding students of religion and culture, that "the belief in the animation of all nature" which arose in the "savage condition prevalent in remote ages among the whole human race"² stands unaltered among living primitive people as if it grew there, and survives as an ancestral relic among the European peasantry.³ Thus the book ends on a note of optimism, linking the doctrine of survivals with nineteenth-century aspiration for social improvement. It was asserted that

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 78.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 283.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 357.

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it is the "office of ethnography to expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition" ¹ and to employ them for the reinstatement of savage culture in the developmental series. Thus was a final answer made to the Archbishop in terms of his own specialty. Thus was the idea of progress restored as an organizing principle in research in the social sciences.

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 453.

III

SURVIVALS AND SOCIAL ORIGINS: MATRIMONIAL, MYTHOLOGICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL.

I

IT is not uncommon in the history of thought to find that new ideas have been greeted with hostility and accepted, if at all, with irresolution and scepticism. But such was not the case in 1871 with the doctrine of survivals. Tylor's dramatic rehabilitation of developmentalism was followed immediately by the rapid diffusion of his procedure. The demand for what Darwin had called "a truer and more cheerful view" of social change than that advanced by the degenerationists, initiated a long period of intense activity in the social studies. Negation was replaced by affirmation. Constructive effort took three forms: the founding of folk-lore societies, the assemblage of folk-lore materials, and finally their use, as survivals, for the recovery of social or institutional origins.

Scarcely had the ink dried on the first edition of *Primitive Culture* before translations began to appear; in Russian in 1872; in German in 1873; in French in 1876.¹ Following the example of a group of

¹ Barbara W. Freire-Marreco, "A Bibliography of Edward Burnett Tylor," in *Anthropological Essays Presented to Edward Burnett Tylor in Honour of his 75th Birthday, Oct. 2, 1907*, edited by N. W. Thomas (Oxford, 1907), pp. 375-409.

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English folk-loreists in 1878, folk-lore societies were organized in France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere on the Continent. And the volume of work subsequently projected and brought to completion by them was very large, even when measured by nineteenth-century standards of accomplishment.

But for at least ten years the work of such societies was restricted to amassing survivals¹ rather than to the recovery of origins, the purpose predicated by Tylor and his anti-clerical colleagues. For many folk-loreists were reluctant to divorce themselves from the charms of antiquarianism and the collection of popular antiquities. Though soon to become the rallying point for all types of developmental reconstruction, the charter members of the English Folk-lore Society, for example, regarded themselves at first merely as gatherers of data. They justified the work of their organization on the modest plea that joint action led to more efficient "preservation and publication of popular tales, ballads, local sayings, superstitions, and old sayings", the things "that are oldest and most

¹ This type of enterprise is a hardy perennial. Recent examples are as follows: Marion L. Underwood, *Survivals of Spanish Influence in the Southwest*, a master's thesis (Berkeley, California, 1919). T. W. Arnold, *Survivals of Sasanian and Manichaean Art in Persian Painting* (Oxford, 1924). H. H. Roberts, "Possible Survivals of African Folk-songs in Jamaica", *Musical Quarterly*, vol. 12 (1927), pp. 340-358. J. R. Murphy, "The Survival of African Music in America", *Popular Science Monthly*, vol. 55 (1927), pp. 660-672. W. B. McDaniel, *Roman Private Life—Its Survivals* (Boston, 1924). C. B. Gulick, *Modern Traits in Old Greek Life* (New York, 1927). See also collections of folk-lore.

² *Folk-lore Record*, vol. 1 (1878), p. viii.

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permanent . . . in human institutions".¹ Again, other students, then and later, found themselves diverted from an interest in the 'natural' history of society by the power of the doctrine to clarify an older and related but nevertheless different type of investigation, namely, the study of the persistence of paganism.² In short, it was not until well along in the eighties, ten or fifteen years after the publication of *Primitive Culture*, that a form of inquiry new to antiquarians, but using their materials, began to appear. Collectors of popular antiquities, to whom collection as an end in itself had ceased to yield complete satisfaction, then began to sense in Tylor's doctrine a means for the significant employment of their hoards of intellectual and cultural oddities. From that time on the collection of survivals, together with their employment for the recovery of the origin of social institutions proceeded rapidly hand in hand.

It should not be assumed, however, that the recovery of origins was conducted within the framework of a conscious plan, or led to readily stated conclusions. The historian is compelled to admit that the history of the employment of the doctrine of survivals, as part of the history of method in the social sciences, is a tangled skein in which few threads can be traced with confidence from beginning to end. To a certain extent, this complexity is due to the wide

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2 (1879), pp. vii, 1.

² *See above*, pp. 47-49.

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variety of materials used and the improvised criteria with which, from time to time, collectors and scholars have proceeded to the task of discovering them. On the whole, all that may be said of the history of the search for survivals is that it moved regularly, with many returns to earlier fields of discovery, from an inspection of the practices of living peasants to the 'mutilated' or 'vestigial' evidence of folk-ideas and activities revealed in printed form in ancient laws, epics, and ballads.

Confusion also arises from the fact that the choice, and order of choice, among all institutions of those for which origins were to be sought was at best fortuitous and difficult to explain. From one point of view, if Tylor is included as an employer of his own procedure, the initial trial of the doctrine might well be said to have been made by him in an effort to recover the origin of the institution of religion.¹ From another, however, if Tylor be excluded from the list, the honour is to be conceded to one of three groups of inquirers—to students of the family,² students of

¹ Followed by Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (1884); *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1887). James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion* (1890-1915). Jane Ellen Harrison, *The Prolegomena to the Study of the Greek Religion* (1903). Lewis Richard Farnell, *Evolution of Religion: An Anthropological Study* (1905); *Cults of the Greek States* (1896-1909). Robert Ranulph Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (1909). J. E. Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of the Greek Religion* (1912); *Ancient Art and Ritual* (1915).

² Lewis Henry Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity in the Human Family* (1871). John Ferguson McLennan, *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry into the Origin of the Form of Capture in Marriage Cer-*

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mythology,¹ or students of the village community.² It may be said, however, by way of summary, that once the doctrine had been introduced into one or another of these several fields of inquiry, it spread with great rapidity to others, and was soon employed by numberless students to recover the origins of literature,³

¹ See materials on the origin of religion in note above.

² George Laurence Gomme, *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life* (1883). Frederic Seebohm, *The English Community Examined in its Relation to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry* (1883). G. L. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folk-lore* (1892). Hugh Exton Seebohm, *On the Structure of Greek Tribal Society: An Essay* (1895). Frederic Seebohm, *The Tribal System in Wales; being part of an Inquiry into the Structure and Methods of Tribal Society* (1895); *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law* (1902). G. L. Gomme, *Folk-lore as an Historical Science* (1908.) Frederick Seebohm, *Customary Acres and their Historical Importance, being a series of Unfinished Essays* (1914).

³ Andrew Lang, "Ballads," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 3 (9th ed., 1878), pp. 283-285; "Introduction," in *Grimm's Household Tales*, tr. by Margaret Hunt (1884). Hutcheson Macaulay Posnet, *Comparative Literature* (1886). Edwin Sidney Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales: An Inquiry into Fairy Mythology* (1890); *English Fairy and Other Folk-tales* (1890). Francis Barton Gummere, *Germanic Origins: A study in Primitive Culture* (1892); "The Ballad and Communal Poetry," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, vol. 5 (1896), pp. 41-56. E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus; a study of Tradition in Story, Custom and Belief*, 1894-96; *Mythology and Folk-tales: Their Relation and Interpretation* (1900). F. B. Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry* (1901); *The Popular Ballad* (1907).

monies (1876). L. H. Morgan, *Ancient Society; or Researches into the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery Through Barbarism to Civilization* (1878). Friedrich Engels, *Der Ursprung des Eigenthums, der Familie und des Staates* (1884). J. F. McLennan, *Patriarchal Theory: based on papers of the late John Ferguson McLennan*, edited and completed by Donald McLennan (1885). Carl Nicolai Starcke, *Die Primitive Familie in ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung* (1888). J. F. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History. The second series: comprising an Inquiry into the Origin of Exogamy*, edited by his widow and Arthur Platt (1896). William Halse Rivers, "The Origin of the Classificatory System," in *Essays Presented to Edward Burnett Tylor in Honour of his 75th Birthday*, edited by N. W. Thomas (1907); *Kinship and Social Organisation* (1914).

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property,¹ the kinship,² the drama,³ the epic,⁴ and even thought⁵ itself.

Despite the uniformity of procedure to be found in the literature of the history of social institutions, and its broad agreement in objective—in the sense that all developmentalists were committed to the search for social origins—there is little evidence of uniformity in conclusion. Although the same doctrine of survivals was employed by economists, students of law and politics, historians of literary forms, sociologists and anthropologists, there was no conformity even within any one of these specific fields concerning the origin of the institution in question. For, owing to controversies already endemic in the pre-Tyloorean literature of institutional development, descriptions of the first stage of each of these great categories of human activity were subject to wide variation. In the seventies students of the family, for example, found them-

¹ See materials on the origin of village communities in note above; also Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (1899).

² James George Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of Kinship* (1905).

³ William Ridgeway, *The Origin of Tragedy with Special Reference to the Greek Tragedians* (1910); *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races, in Special Reference to the Origin of Greek Tragedy* (1915).

⁴ Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (1907); "The Early Greek Epic", in *Anthropology and the Classics*, edited by R. R. Marett (1908).

⁵ Francis Macdonald Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy; A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (1912).

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selves plunged by past contentions into a protracted debate in which one side upheld its origin in promiscuity, while others adhered to theories of matriarchal or patriarchal beginnings. Survivals were found which presumably supported each argument and all hypotheses. Post-Tyloorean students of the institution of religion, for similar reasons, were divided into two schools, one of which asserted the logical and historical priority of the religious idea or creed, while another made ritual or the religious act anterior to theology. When survivals were appealed to the controversy was not ended. It was merely continued on the basis of new arguments. Folklorists, beginning with Lang and Hartland and terminating with Gummere, undertook investigations which became part of the larger study of the origin of the institution of literature. But survivals, in the form of elaborate collections of ballads, folk-tales and fairy lore, were not employed to recover this origin in separation from previous speculation concerning origins. They were used, on the contrary, to support one or another of the ancient theories which seemed to any given student to be correct. Although a group of economists, composed of Gomme, the Seebohms, and by remote inheritance, Veblen and Ogburn, used similar data to arrive at the beginnings of property, no two agreed in their descriptions of early forms of ownership. Indeed, all that may be tentatively said by the his-

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torian of the employment of the doctrine of survivals is this: that whatever the institutional focus, investigators or origins exhibited an inclination to press them further and further back in time, closer and closer to a common source in religion. For owing to its inception in Tylor's controversy with Archbishop Whately, the doctrine throughout its post-Tyloorean career was never wholly severed from its theological moorings. From Lang to Marett, Gomme to Veblen, Jane Ellen Harrison to Cornford, it continued to bear the marks of Tylor's personal absorption in problems associated with the origin of religion, and the genetic relation of that institution to myth, art, language, marriage, literature and philosophy.

II

According to many commentators, the origin of the family, with its affiliated institutions, was the first to be recovered by an appeal to Tyloorean presuppositions. To a limited extent this may be true. But the employment of survivals as a means of solving problems associated with the reconstruction of early domestic relationships occupies a somewhat anomalous position in the history of thought. For while the family, apart from marriage, became subject to treatment according to the canons of developmentalism at a later date than other institutions, the search for the origin of marriage, in separation from the family,

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involved a procedure approximating that set forth in *Primitive Culture* some years before that volume was published. Who, then, was responsible for the pre-Tyloorean doctrine of survivals? What was their rôle in the Whatlean controversy, and what part did their inquiries play in the history of the history of social institutions?

It will be recalled by those familiar with the history of humanistic inquiry that for centuries before the mid-Victorian revival of interest in the problem of social development, debate concerning matrimonial institutions proceeded from the pens of jurists and political theorists. To each of these groups of scholars marriage and the family appeared as separate realms of discourse. To the jurist, on the one hand, the matrimonial contract, with its alteration in property rights and the status of women, was logically and historically prior to the emergence of the family. Marriage was also an institution in which many diversities had long been recognized. Polygamous practices had been noted as having had an almost world-wide distribution, and promiscuity had frequently been projected as the condition in which differences in marriage forms had found their origin.¹

¹ Henry Home, Lord Kames, "Progress of the Female Sex", in his *Sketches of the History of Man: Considerably Enlarged by the Last Additions and Corrections of the Author*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh and London, 1788), p. 5. John Millar, *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks; or, An Inquiry into the Circumstances which give rise to Influence and Authority, in the Different Members of Society* (Basle, 1793), pp. 15-16.

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The political theorist, on the other hand, following the pattern of thought laid down in Aristotelian philosophy and the Decalogue, regarded the patriarchal family as the point of departure for determining the location of authority and the origin of civil society. Although matriarchal cultures were known to exist, they were dismissed as evidence of human depravity.¹ Paternal rule and descent was accepted as the form of social organization prescribed by nature. The family as the primary social unit was assumed, therefore, to be unresponsive to modification. It was not considered historically in and for itself. It was treated as having maintained its immemorial patriarchal features unaltered throughout past time.

In the sixth decade of the last century, however, European opinion was startled by the appearance of four treatises which struck at the roots of the old pattern of thought. Each of them was written by a lawyer, a fact which in the nature of the case perpetuated the old juristic interest in the marriage as a point of departure for the location of authority, the determination of lines of inheritance, and the means of reckoning descent. But each, in addition, explicitly or implicitly identified the family and marriage as a single changing institution. Even Maine, who reiterated the patriarchal theory of the origin of civil

¹ John L. Myres, "The Influence of Anthropology on the Course of Political Science", *University of California Publications in History*, vol. 4 (1916), pp. 52-54, 62-64.

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society, stated emphatically that the archaic unit so described was not generally a durable institution, since many causes had "helped to mitigate the stringency of the father's power".¹ Three of them, Bachofen's, Morgan's, and McLennan's, found the rudiments of monogamy and patriarchal society in a prior matriarchal state, and resorted finally to the old conception of promiscuity as the initial condition of mankind. And two, Morgan's and McLennan's, sustained the latter conclusion by use of materials held by many to be similar to Tylor's survivals. In short, by 1870 the patriarchal family was no longer universally regarded as the permanent and immutable basis of advanced culture, persisting unaltered from the beginning until the present. The family, together with such related institutions as marriage, kinship systems, law, property, and the state, were numbered among those to be appropriately submitted to developmental reconstruction.

With these facts in mind, the question at issue entails an analysis of the work of Morgan and McLennan. To what extent was the hypothesis of social development sustained at their hands by a procedure approximating Tylor's? Was it Morgan or McLennan or Tylor who was responsible for the widespread employment of survivals in the study of the

¹ Henry Sumner Maine, *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas* (London, 1917), pp. 78-86.

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family? These are questions of some interest in the history of method in the social sciences.

Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) whose early work just preceded that of McLennan and Tylor, reached the summit of his career with the completion of two books, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, published in 1871, and its expansion, *Ancient Society*, in 1877. The latter earned for Morgan the title, "father of American anthropology", a tribute similar to that bestowed upon Tylor by admirers of his *Primitive Culture*. The likeness between the two men, however, was not confined to this fact. *Ancient Society* resembles *Primitive Culture* in its objective and general procedure. The authors of both books were committed to the task of tracing the theoretical course of civilization or the mental history of mankind. To achieve this genetic end, both relied upon cultural correspondences and posited a reciprocal relation between the breadth of spatial distribution of similar ideas and their age or sequence in time. The two works, moreover, were equally comprehensive in scope. Tylor found himself confronted with a veritable panorama of institutions and his researches, as a result, carry the reader into an extended discussion of the origin and development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom. Morgan's inquiries "into the lines of human progress", in like manner include a consideration of

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the growth of the idea of the family, and finally the growth of the idea of property. But here the likeness ends. For whereas Tylor's book was framed with reference to a difficulty in thought for which he offered a methodological solution, the American attorney was unencumbered with intellectual doubts and devoid of methodological self-consciousness. The theory of the degeneracy of savages is mentioned only to be dismissed as contrary "to the facts of human experience". The idea of progress as an envisagement of change was accepted without misgivings as logically natural, universal and inevitable.

As a matter of fact, it is not without significance to the historian of ideas that at the time Morgan's studies were begun he had little or no interest in the problem of change in culture or the institution of the family as such.¹ Inspired by intimate and prolonged contact with the Seneca tribe of the New York Iroquois, a primitive and exploited people, he published the *League of the Iroquois* in 1851 for humanitarian reasons. The author wished "to encourage a kinder feeling toward the Indian, founded upon a truer knowledge of his civil and domestic institutions".² Hence, although under the influence of Aristotle and Greek political history, Morgan described

¹ Bernhard J. Stern, *Lewis Henry Morgan, Social Evolutionist* (Chicago, 1931), *passim*.

² Lewis Henry Morgan, *The League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois*, edited and annotated by H. M. Lloyd (New York, 1922), pp. ix, 51-52.

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this group as occupying the highest position among Indian races and a relatively advanced stage "in the regular progression of political institutions" in the world at large,¹ he was not writing as a student of the development of the political state or any other institution. These statements were made in passing to sustain his contention that Indian social organization provided a basis for reclamation and civilization.

Morgan's first formal interest in the problem of institutional change began in the sixties, when the mass of kinship materials later to be incorporated in *Systems of Consanguinity* had to be invested with some ethnological meaning. The body of this monumental work of six hundred pages exhibits in tabular and expository form the kinship systems of one hundred and thirty-nine tribes and nations representing four-fifths of the human race. A discussion occupying a bare fifty-odd pages, and formulated in a series of questions and answers, contains his effort to trace their genetic connection and their relation to various forms of the human family.

How many systems of relationship, radically distinct from each other, he asks in part, do the Tables present? His answer, as is well known, was two: the *classificatory* and the *descriptive*.²

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 129.

² In the *classificatory* system "consanguinei are never described, but are classified into categories, irrespective of their nearness or remoteness to *Ego*; and the same term of relationship is applied to all persons in the same category." In the *descriptive* system "consanguinei are

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What was the order of their appearance in time? What, again, was the time order of sub-systems within the two large categories? Under what conditions, granting the uniformity of the human mind, had these two systems come into existence? What, particularly, was the origin of the classificatory system? The answers to these questions are stated many times in both *Systems of Consanguinity* and *Ancient Society*. The *classificatory* system is projected as preceding the *descriptive* in time, and is regarded as itself the outcome of a prior condition in which kinship was unrecognized and human beings were assumed to live in an unregulated horde. The history of the institution of marriage, since choice of mates was dictated by considerations of kinship, is portrayed in a parallel sequence beginning with promiscuous intercourse and followed in order with the intermarriage of brothers and sisters, group marriage, temporary pairing, and permanent monogamy.¹ The development of the family envisaged vaguely in modern terms as an institution for determining the locus of authority, the tracing of descent and the transmission of property, begins with the communal² family, is followed by the

¹ L. H. Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (Washington, 1871), p. 480.

² *Ibid.*, p. 488; Morgan asserts further that the matriarchal stage of gentile or clan organization was preceded by two forms of the family, but these, the Consanguine and Punaluan, are usually described in

described either by the primary term of relationship or a combination of these terms, thus making the relationship of each person specific."
(*Ancient Society* [Chicago, 1912] pp. 403-404.)

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appearance of the gens under matriarchal rule, and terminates with the patriarchate.

But the arrangement of kinship materials in this order, be it remembered, could only be achieved when the relative antiquity of the classificatory and descriptive systems had been established. How, then, did Morgan determine the comparative ages of these two major categories together with those of the marriage and family forms associated with them? How did he arrive at "the great series of sequence of customs and institutions which mark the pathway of man's progress"? To what extent were survivals employed as evidence to sustain his conclusions? The answer to these questions is the key to the structure of *Ancient Society*. It is also the frail basis for the statement, too frequently made, that Morgan introduced the doctrine of survivals into the study of the family.

"The lines of human progress," in broad kinship terms, were reconstructed by Morgan, in the first instance, by the study of the world-wide distribution of the two major systems of consanguinity. That is to say, assuming that the larger the territory covered by a trait, the older the trait itself, he was led to regard all kinship systems included within the classificatory system of relationships as antecedent in time to those embraced by the descriptive system of relationships.

purely kinship terms, with the suggestion that family life in such societies was carried on in communal households. (*Ancient Society*, pp. 425, 440, 454.)

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The arrangement of the entire developmental sequence, including sub-systems of consanguinity, was based, however, upon the comparative method, a procedure which utilizes two series of facts, namely: "those provided by the observation of existing societies, and those provided by the study of the past".¹ That is to say, turning his attention to existing societies, Malayan peoples² with their several forms of marriage were held by Morgan to exhibit in the present a transition within the classificatory system from promiscuity, through the consanguine family to the matriarchate. American Indian cultures, again, were alleged to present a similar record of change within the same system of relationship, beginning with 'traces' of a pre-matriarchal condition suggesting the consanguine family, a stage of mother-right and a transition to the patriarchy. But observing in the past of classical cultures that all of the different sub-systems of consanguinity manifested among Malayan and American Indian groups had appeared in a similar time order, he assumed with all preceding developmentalists, that a natural history of the family, marriage, and society could be reconstructed by the identification of the present or co-existing series

¹ Frederick John Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven, 1925), p. 98.

² The term Malayan was chosen by Morgan because, following Max Müller's classification of the families of languages, the Polynesian language was placed in the category of Malaic tongues [Friedrich Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, vol. 1 (7th ed., London, 1873)], p. 452.

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with the time or historical series. In other words, the use of the comparative method confirmed, according to current procedures, the greater antiquity of the classificatory system. It corroborated with historical evidence the origin of monogamic marriage, civil society, the descriptive and classificatory systems in the unregulated horde. It established the antecedence of the matriarchate to the patriarchate. It upheld the hypothesis that civilization was the outcome of progressive change in past time.

To many developmentalists before and since, this theoretical demonstration of social progress, based upon eighteenth-century ideas, would have been enough. But at the time Morgan wrote, the inclusion of matriarchal or matrilineal societies as members of the developmental series was under attack by orthodox adherents of the Aristotelian pattern of thought, which invested the human race "from its infancy with a knowledge of the family under paternal power".¹ Furthermore, unread in eighteenth-century juristic literature on marriage and the history of the status of women, he was persuaded that the theory of original promiscuity which was new and abhorrent to him might be equally repugnant to fellow inquirers.² To the end, therefore, of sustaining the sequences achieved by the use of the comparative method and

¹ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 514.

² Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*, pp. 481, 484; *Ancient Society*, p. 423.

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particularly the inclusion therein of these two elements, Morgan was constrained to search for auxiliary evidence. This he found in philology, and the assumed stability of kinship systems. The latter, in turn, received support by an appeal to the idea of the antiquity and inferiority of primitive peoples, by inferences from geographical isolation, additional historical data, and, to a limited extent, by survivals.

“Philology,” said Morgan in the sentence introducing *Systems of Consanguinity*, “has proved itself an admirable instrument for the classification of nations into families on the basis of linguistic affinities.”¹ In this statement and elsewhere he seems to have been greatly influenced by Max Müller’s *Lectures on the Science of Language*, first published in 1861. At all events, Morgan’s genealogical treatment and arrangement of kinship systems not only repeats the terminology of Müller’s classification of families of languages;² it also reproduces the time order adopted by the philologist in tracing the growth or natural history of speech. In Morgan the priority of the classificatory system of relationships as a whole rests upon the assumed antiquity of the languages spoken by classificatory peoples. While the antiquity of the

¹ Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*, p. v.

² Morgan adds only two important members to Müller’s series, the Ganowanian, and the Punaluan. The former was composed of American Indian peoples “of the bow and arrow” who possessed a classificatory system of relationships. The latter term was applied specifically to the Hawaiian system. (*Systems of Consanguinity*, p. 453, n. 26; p. 457; *Ancient Society*, p. 436.)

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Turanian, Malayan, and Punaluan (or matrilineal)¹ systems within the larger kinship category is derived in part from linguistic and historical evidences of the antiquity of the Turanian and Polynesian² families of languages.³

Nevertheless, Morgan realized that the priority of the classificatory system, its emergence from an antecedent condition of promiscuity, and the validity of the sequences achieved by the comparative method could not be allowed to rest solely upon the depositions of philologists. He asserted repeatedly that the whole question of the arrangement of materials collected in *Systems of Consanguinity* turned upon "whether the radical forms of the system" were stable and capable of self-perpetuation.⁴ In order to document and substantiate the archaic rank of existing classificatory peoples, he desired to prove that the system, being resistant to change, had preserved "some of the oldest memorials of human thought and experience."⁵ On this important point, however, the evidence is weaker than elsewhere. Historical data, inferences from geographical isolation, and survivals were invoked, but

¹ Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*, pp. 386-387, 397-400, 442.

² Max Müller, as cited, vol. 2 (1873), pp. 10-11.

³ Furthermore, although Müller felt that "the time for approaching the problem of the common origin of all languages had not yet come" (*Science of Language*, vol. 1, pp. 372, 378), Morgan regarded his own inquiries into the origin of kinship systems as a clue to the language problem. (*Systems of Consanguinity*, pp. v-vi, 506.)

⁴ Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*, p. 508.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

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they referred to a few subordinate members of the classificatory category, rather than to the category in its totality. Historical data, for example, distinguished by the terms 'relics', 'traces', 'outcrops' and 'remains' and derived for the most part from Herodotus, Polybius, Cæsar and Tacitus, were employed to confirm the existence of an early condition in which descent was traced through the female line.¹ The argument from isolation was called upon to substantiate the antiquity and stationary character of Hawaiian culture.² Similarly survivals, which appear only in *Ancient Society* and refer solely to the same culture, serve merely to establish on that area the priority of the consanguine to the Punaluan family.³ As a matter of fact, in his effort to sustain the assumption of the stability and fixity of the classificatory system as a whole, Morgan forgot to assemble proofs and stooped to declamation and rhetoric. "When a system has come into practical use," he said on one occasion, "it would, from the nature of the case,⁴ (or in the virtue of its organic structure)⁵ be very slow to change." In another context he asserted that "this

¹ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, pp. 357-365, 370; see also pp. 187, 296, 301, 438, 440, and *Systems of Consanguinity*, pp. 1, 413, 431, 487, and *passim*.

² Morgan, *Ancient Society*, pp. 57, 448-449; see also *Systems of Consanguinity*, pp. 448-449, 508-509.

³ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 424; see also, p. 36, n 1; pp. 62, 165 221.

⁴ Morgan, *Systems of Consanguinity*, p. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 490, 508.

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tendency to permanence is increased by the fact that systems exist by custom rather than legal enactment . . . therefore, a motive to change must be as universal as the usage".¹

From the foregoing it is clear that Morgan anticipated Tylor neither in the formulation of a doctrine of survivals nor in the use of a procedure essentially Tyloorean in character. The term appears in no work of Morgan's published prior to *Primitive Culture*. Furthermore, when survivals came to be frugally employed by him six years later in *Ancient Society*, they were discovered, not as by Tylor, among the practices and ideas of civilized men for the purpose of restoring primitive man to a place in the developmental series. On the contrary, they were found exclusively in the culture of one primitive people, the Hawaiian (a culture already assumed to be the lowest in the series) and were used to establish the existence of a condition still more archaic.

It is possible that commentators, who infer the precedence of the American attorney over the British anthropologist,² have been misled by the usual identification among developmentalists between survivals,

¹ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 407-408.

² A. A. Goldenweiser, "Anthropological Theories of Political Origins", in *A History of Political Theories, Recent Times*, edited by C. E. Merriam and H. E. Barnes (New York, 1924), p. 436; G. E. Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions Chiefly in England and the United States, with an Introductory Analysis of the Literature and the Theories of Primitive Marriage and the Family* (Chicago, 1904), p. 67; E. A. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (5th ed., London, 1921), pp. 19-20.

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in the Tylorean sense, and 'traces', 'relics', 'outcrops', and 'remains'. They seem to have assumed that Morgan adopted similar synonyms and used them interchangeably with the term 'survival'. But such was not the case. Upon examination, it is patent that when terms other than, but similar to, the term 'survival' were employed in the American publications, they have an entirely different connotation and indicate the use of a wholly different type of documentation. When 'traces', 'relics', 'outcrops', and 'remains' are invoked, whether in *Systems of Consanguinity* or in *Ancient Society*, the archæological and geological implications of mutilation and decay, so inseparable from Tylor's concept, are far from Morgan's thoughts. The loss of meaning and utility, conceived of as having been sustained by 'surviving' elements in the course of transmission from primitive to advanced culture, is not suggested. 'Traces', 'remains', and the like, on the contrary, almost always refer in Morgan's writings to more or less well-known and orthodox forms of dated verification. They are terms used to indicate an appeal to relatively commonplace historical documentation possessing, as its only unusual quality, an ancient, scattered, and scanty character. 'Traces' and 'remains' to Morgan meant, not as they did to Tylor, irrational customs maintained by civilized peoples, and remarked for their non-conformity with the existing pattern of advanced

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culture. They were historical evidence that certain customs were once practised which, if perpetuated to-day among civilized men, would be out of keeping with present advanced culture.

The claim of John Ferguson McLennan (1827-1881) to priority in the formulation of a doctrine of survivals stands upon a different footing. His studies began in 1857 when,¹ at the age of thirty, his attention was called to inequalities in the rate of progress between city and country and the existence of customs inconsistent with the patriarchal theory of civil origins. Reflection on these led to the perception of other disharmonies. He noted that in London groups as destitute of religious knowledge as the Ojibeways dwelt "within the shadow of the cathedrals",² while "in Derbyshire and Cornwall, at one extreme, and in the Highlands and the Hebrides, at the other, . . . remains of pre-Christian customs and superstitions" were preserved out of respect for ancient usage. Meditating on the meaning of these facts, he was led, as were folklorists, to infer that in progressive communities all sections do not advance *pari-passu*; that ideas and ceremonials, like everything else, are subject to the laws of growth and decay. Continuing in phrases reminiscent of the collectors of popular an-

¹ In an article on "Law" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 8 (8th ed., 1857), p. 255.

² J. F. McLennan, "The Early History of Man", *North British Review*, vol. 50 (1869), p. 543.

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tiquities, he asserted that "disintegration once begun", all that remained after a period of time might well be merely "a knick-knack, . . . a single act or sign, a pastime or a game, or a ridiculous proceeding with no apparent meaning".¹ In short, finding himself possessed of materials identical with those which fell into Tylor's hands, he was led to similar conclusions couched, however, in a different terminology. "Wherever we observe symbolical (or disintegrated) forms," he said "we are justified in inferring that in the past life of the peoples employing them there were corresponding realities." When such realities are found among primitive races, "then we may safely conclude . . . that what these [primitive] conditions now are, those employing the symbols once were".²

In *Primitive Marriage*, published in 1865 while Tylor's doctrine was still in the course of formulation, McLennan's first sentence introduces the reader to his concept of legal symbolism. The forty pages which follow develop and illustrate it by indicating its presence in the form of marriage by capture among the historical peoples of classical antiquity and among existing savage tribes in Asia, Africa, and the

¹ J. F. McLennan, "Bride-catching", *The Argosy*, vol. 2 (1886), p. 41.

² McLennan, *Primitive Marriage: An Inquiry Into the Origin of the Form of Capture in Marriage Ceremonies* (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 12.

McLennan's use of the term *symbol* to refer to unwritten evidence of past events and conditions is probably derived from his legal studies. One eighteenth-century commentator on Scots law states, for example,

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Americas. The question is then raised as to the meaning of this symbol for the purpose of historical induction. The form of McLennan's response was shaped by two major types of data. The one was the wide distribution of marriage by capture in symbolic (or disintegrated) form. The other was the actual prevalence of the practice of wife-capture in America, Australia, the islands of the Pacific, Asia, and Europe.¹ With these in mind, he was led to the reconstruction of an early social condition "in which it was inevitable that wives should be systematically procured by capture".²

It should be borne in mind, however, that this early condition recovered by the employment of the comparative method and the use of symbols, was not projected by McLennan as the first stage of the developmental series, nor as the origin of marriage. To determine the more remote sources of that institution, he abandoned the use of symbols and had recourse to logic. He postulated the antecedent exis-

¹ McLennan, as cited, pp. 59-92. ² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

that "another symbol was anciently used in proof that a sale was perfected, which continues to this day in bargains of lesser importance among the lower ranks of people, the parties licking thumbs". (John Erskine, *Institutes of the Laws of Scotland*, vol. 3 [Edinburgh, 1765-68], p. iii, par. 5). He may also have been indebted to a German usage of the term 'symbolics' to refer to the study of symbols or the mysterious rites of antiquity and mythology. (John Ogilvie, *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. 4 [New York, 1883], p. 285; G. F. Cruezer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der Alten Völker Besonders der Griechen* [Leipzig, 1810-12]; C. O. Müller, *History of the Antiquities of the Doric Race*, translated from the German by H. Tuffnell and G. C. Lewis [2nd ed., London, 1839].)

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tence of tribes animated by mutual hostility and organized on the principle of exogamy, a state in which tribesmen were dependent on other tribes for wives.¹ He argued that exogamy in turn "must have" been derived from an archaic way of life in which the practice of infanticide had so reduced the number of women that men were compelled to steal their wives from other groups.² He inferred further that the system of blood relationship characteristic of exogamy "could only" have issued from a prior system in which kinship was traced through females alone. And, finally, he derived this ancient matriarchal system of consanguinity from a condition still more archaic, in which human groups "could have had" no idea of kinship³ and lived, as a result, in a state of promiscuity.

In other words, although McLennan elaborated a procedure similar to Tylor's, it was put to a slightly but significantly different use. Like Morgan, he was unconscious of the presence in current controversy of a threat against the developmental hypothesis as a solution of the problem of institutional change. Both conducted their inquiries against a familiar and, to them, unchallenged background of optimistic social theory. Neither felt called upon to defend the idea of progress as an organizing principle in research. Although aware of the methodological novelty of the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 289.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

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concept of symbols, McLennan felt no compulsion to employ them for the recovery of ultimate social origins or the rehabilitation of the comparative method. Having established the origin of the 'form' of capture in an early condition, and having utilized symbols in sustaining his thesis that marriage by capture occupied an intermediate place in the development of marital institutions, he proceeded to the reconstruction of antecedent stages on grounds that were wholly of an eighteenth-century *a priori* character. Unlike Tylor's doctrine of survivals, and with the exception of a few references to what he called 'traces', the legal symbol as a documentary vehicle carried him back, not to ultimate origins, but only part of the way.

In the strict sense of the word, then, neither Morgan nor McLennan was responsible for a pre-Tyloorean doctrine of survivals, or its wide diffusion among students of marriage and the family. Yet it cannot be denied that the study of the two institutions since the seventies has turned exclusively upon the controversies opened or re-opened by both of them. That is to say, in dealing with domestic origins later investigators have contributed little or nothing new. They have merely debated the alternative merits of the theory of promiscuity, the theory of mother-right, and the theory of the patriarchy. With the appearance of *Primitive Culture*, however, it was inevitable

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that survivals would be employed by many to support every contention, no matter how contradictory. They, rather than symbols, were invoked by Engels,¹ for example, to sustain and amplify Morgan for socialist readers. They were collected by Robertson Smith² to verify with Arabian materials the hypothetical history of marriage presented by McLennan. In spite of telling criticisms of the procedure by Crawley and Westermarck,³ a host of other students amassed a literature of familial survivals which defies the bibliographer. And finally, in 1913, the doctrine received its definite revival by W. H. R. Rivers, who proposed not only to demonstrate the reality of the process of survival,⁴ but to indicate the way its use might be further extended in continued studies of the origin of the classificatory system, the history of the family,⁵ and the reconstruction of the past of non-historical societies.⁶

¹ Friedrich Engels, *Der Ursprung des Eigenthums, der Familie und des Staates* (Holtingen-Zurich, 1884).

² William Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (Cambridge, 1885).

³ See below.

⁴ W. H. R. Rivers, "Survival in Sociology", *The Sociological Review*, vol. 6 (1913), pp. 293-305.

⁵ Rivers, *Kinship and Social Organization* (London, 1914); *Social Organization*, edited by W. J. Perry (New York, 1924); "On the Origin of the Classificatory System of Relationships", in *Anthropological Essays Presented to Edward Burnett Tylor in Honour of his 75th Birthday, Oct. 2, 1907*, edited by N. W. Thomas (Oxford, 1907), pp. 293-305.

⁶ Rivers, *The History of Melanesian Society* (Cambridge, 1914).

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III

Considered in somewhat arbitrary separation from the work of Morgan and McLennan, the history of the diffusion of the doctrine of survivals during six decades following the publication of *Primitive Culture* falls roughly into two main periods. The first from 1871 to 1890, was dominated by the folk-lorists, who, assisted by the imagery and technique of geology and archæology, attempted to recover the origin of mythology, religion, and political institutions. The second, from 1890 to the present, on the other hand, was dominated by students of archæology who, assisted by what they called "the anthropological method" or folk-lore, attempted to reconstruct the origin of classical religions, art, and literature.

Although not always aware of the orientation of their inquiries, the central objective of Tylor's immediate followers was the achievement of a developmental series by the recovery of a first or original stage of culture similar to that exhibited by the culture of present primitive peoples. In so doing, they were presented by Tylor with two alternatives. With psychological presuppositions in mind, they might, with him, choose to view culture as a mental phenomenon and endeavour to arrive at social origins in psychological terms. Or again with him, but this time in an archæological or historical mood, they

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might regard the doctrine of survivals as a device whereby the imperfections of the earlier stretches of the historical record could be overcome, and dated inquiry pressed back to an archaic period for which other documentary materials were either scarce or absent. The first or formative period, during which the use of the doctrine fell largely into the hands of folklorists, was focused in the work of two men. One of them, Lang, followed Tylor the psychologist, and, as a developmentalist, employed survivals to recover social origins in terms of individual psychology. The other, Gomme, read Tylor as an historian, and employed survivals primarily to extend the dated historical record.

Andrew Lang (1844-1912), whose productive years closely paralleled those of Tylor, worked largely in the fields of primitive religion and ritual, magic and mythology. Compiler of fairy tales, and collector of ballads in the romantic tradition of Sir Walter Scott, he was a poet and journalist who valued in himself, above all other attainments, his accomplishments as an anthropologist. A student of the classics, as well, he readily turned his youthful attention to the study of mythology. In this field he found inquiry subservient to the assumptions of the contemporary school of philologists. Disregarding all other questions which might have been suggested by the presence in Western thought of a large body of mythic material, these

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scholars had formulated the problem in traditional rationalistic terms. Instead of endeavouring to account for all differences of religion, they followed the procedure of the Greek sceptics and Church Fathers in noting only two, namely, the disparity in modern advanced faiths between the rational and irrational, the high and the low, the spiritual and the repulsive. "To what," they asked, "are these striking incongruities in belief to be ascribed; to what the ugly in religion, the irrational in myth?" As Lang put it, civilized fancy, at their suggestion, was puzzled not so much by a beautiful God of the sun, as by a Son God "who made love in the shape of a dog".¹

In attempting to solve this problem, fashionable mythological theory in the sixties and seventies was committed, at the hands of Max Müller and his colleagues, to the flattering Aryan hypothesis of social origins. Resenting somewhat the implications of eighteenth-century developmentalists that Indo-European culture, with its mythic component, was derived from the "disgusting customs of savages",² they turned for escape to a theory of degradation. Myths, according to the philologists, were not to be regarded as the outcome of the religious ideas of savage ancestors of modern man. They were the

¹ Andrew Lang, *Modern Mythology* (London, 1897), *passim*.

² Lang, "Mythology and Fairy Tales", *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 19 (1873), p. 620.

³ Lang, *Modern Mythology* (1873), p. xv. This theory is not to be confused with that of the degeneration of savagery.

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result of a pathological and degenerative process in language itself. When, in the course of time, they said, etymologies became blurred and forgotten, fresh stories of an increasingly mundane character were invented to account for the new forms assumed by proper names.

Lang, opposed to the philological explanation of the irrational element in mythology, turned to the doctrine of survivals to support another theory. He contended that the philological school in accounting for certain linguistic phenomena as the result of a disease of words, derived its theory from a limited inspection of the Aryan group of languages and ignored the data of anthropology. He maintained that once the similarity of Aryan and classical myths to those of contemporary savages was admitted, their generic characteristics as survivals would be acknowledged, and their origin in the mental peculiarities of savages become obvious. Mythology, to him, represented the perpetuation in survival of the old stage of thought from which man had slowly emancipated himself. Degradation in word-form was thus dismissed as an explanation of an important group of religious ideas, and religion was manifested "as a continual and rational progress".

Lang's battle for the classification and use of irrational elements in myth as survivals was carried on for thirty active years. It began two years after the

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appearance of *Primitive Culture* with an article on *Mythology and Fairy Tales*.¹ In this essay, Tylor was mentioned twice, but not as master. Two or three years later, when Lang was called upon to prepare an article on *Mythology* for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,² the situation had changed. He had perhaps re-read Tylor. At all events, he had obviously acquired a firmer grasp of the doctrine of survivals and the peasant and primitive materials it exposed for use. He had also firmly re-envisioned the problem of mythology as the reconciliation of the irrational in legends of the gods with current religious sentiment. And he sought a "stage of human society, and of the human intellect, in which facts that appear to us to be monstrous . . . are accepted. . . ." The result of his search was the conclusion that "what we regard as irrational seems a part of . . . the rational order . . . to contemporary savages, and in the past seemed equally rational and natural to *savages* concerning whom we have historical information". In other words, Lang endeavoured to prove that the linguistic phenomena described by Müller as the result of degeneration, were in fact a legacy, in the form of survivals, from ancestors of the civilized races "who were in an intellectual state not higher than that of the Australians". He proposed to use this legacy, according to

¹ As cited.

² Lang, "Mythology", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 17 (9th ed., 1878), pp. 135-138.

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the Tylorean plan, as a body of documents for the recovery of an original stage of culture in psychological terms.

George Laurence Gomme (1853-1916), whose insight and industry have given him an enviable place in the history of the social sciences, though somewhat younger than Tylor, was, as successively Honourable Secretary, Director, and President of the Folk-lore Society, in intimate association with the great anthropologist. Like other students of folk-lore, Gomme acquiesced enthusiastically in the estimate placed by Lang upon the doctrine of survivals. But he differed from the balladist-mythologist, owing to the fact that his interests were primarily those of the historian, secondarily those of the developmentalist, and in no degree those of the psychologist. His researches were planned to yield not the psychology of an original state of culture derived from the study of primitive peoples, but a description of an historically early and geographically limited group, the archaic Briton. His problem was the reconstruction of the past upon the basis of clues afforded by survivals in the present, but his ultimate objective was achieved only after survivals were revalued, and their anomalous position accounted for. In other words, Gomme occupies a unique place among folk-lorists and other followers of Tylor, in that he not only employed the doctrine of survivals for reconstructing the dated past, but sub-

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jected them to classification, and even attempted to account for their persistence in present culture.

His first book, *Primitive Folk-moots* (1880), published nine years subsequent to the appearance of *Primitive Culture*, was an historical enterprise in the recovery of archaic British political institutions, involving the extension of the work of previous students of the village community by the utilization of new materials and the description of new segments of the culture of the ancient Britons. The efforts of such scholars as Hume, Hallam, Kemble, and Stubbs, to reconstruct this period, were criticized by Gomme because, as soon as English written records ceased to yield evidence, each had retreated to the use of the comparative method and continental or Indo-European materials. As a follower of Tylor, Gomme was not opposed to the use of the comparative method. But he was persuaded that the literary record of the past could be supplemented with material derived from folk-lore and the use of the comparative method thereby postponed. He was convinced that, by the employment of survivals, the description of an archaic cultural condition could be enriched, and the enquiry pressed back without the use of non-British materials. Mythologists, he felt, could be relied upon for descriptions of the religious activities of primitive Britons, archæologists for the domestic, investigators of early agriculture for the economic. He himself

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proposed, in *Primitive Folk-moots* and succeeding studies, to assemble materials for the description of their political life. His subsequent work as a restorer of the past appeared in his *Village Community* (1889) and in the *Governance of London* (1907).

As an historian working on new materials, however, he was somewhat on the defensive. The doctrine of survivals had been stated and widely accepted. An impressive collection of folk-lore had already been made. But, "I can discern," he said, deprecating the wide variation among folk-lorist colleagues, "that the study of survivals has hitherto proceeded along no settled lines."¹ The technical problem of evaluating the new corpus of documents had not been met. He was constrained, therefore, not only to demonstrate to fellow historians what could be done with survivals in terms of the reconstruction of the historical past, but to elaborate and state a technique for employing them. As a result, his work in recovering archaic British political institutions was paralleled by a life-long classificatory and bibliographical effort to correct the taxonomic shortcomings of antiquarians and folklorists, and to prepare folk-lore for the use of the modern historian.

This undertaking was initiated in 1883 with *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life*. The enterprise

¹ George Laurence Gomme, "A review of *The Golden Bough* by J. G. Frazer", *Folk-lore*, vol. 12 (1901), pp. 223-225.

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began with a geographical limitation of the area from which survivals were to be selected for discussion, a declaration of partial independence from the comparative method, and an effort to rearrange folk-lore materials according to their relative age. Instead of advocating the employment of the comparative method and foreign materials to reconstruct the British past, British survivals, once classified, were to be used.

" My task," said Gomme, " is much more humble than that sketched by the graphic pen of Mr. Lang. . . . Instead of taking with me the folk-lore of all Europe and going into the lands and homes of savages, I propose taking only the folk-lore of England . . . and showing how this journey of mine has been equal to a journey backward through all the stages of English civilization to a time when the inhabitants of all this island belonged to the class of primitive man who could have supplied Greek or Roman inquirers with the self-same knowledge that the modern inquirer obtains from modern savages."¹ Alien data, particularly that derived from the observation of modern savages, was to be invoked only when these were exhausted, or for purposes of verification, to indicate to British investigators the type of life primitive British people might have led, and the type of survivals which might be anticipated in

¹ Gomme, *Folk-lore Relics of Early Village Life* (London, 1883), p. 5.

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present culture. Furthermore, in re-docketing and re-arranging British folk-lore, Gomme opposed the current taxonomic procedure which regarded all survivals as equally old, and classified the records of archaic British society on the basis of civilized ideas. He insisted, first, that survivals of archaic culture should be segregated from those of later periods;¹ and second, that the primitive residuum should be arranged in conformity with the forms of social organization of modern savagery as reflected in the primitive British village community.

Once questions of classification were raised and answered, however, Gomme was too vigilant and intrepid a scholar either to overlook or ignore the claims of other problems. Outstanding among these was that one which manifested itself in the inconsistency between old and new culture elements. Essentially an historian so long as inquiry followed the conventional historical pattern and was restricted to the "fortunes and existences of a particular people",² he became an evolutionist when confronted with "anthropological history",³ or with an inquiry which dealt with change in culture abstracted from peoples, events, dates, and geographical boundaries. He also remained a strict developmentalist when confronted with the problem of why survivals appear in present culture as function-

¹ Gomme, *Folk-lore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908), p. 145.
² Teggart, as cited, p. 11. ³ Gomme, as cited, pp. xiii-xiv.

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less culture elements, and the question of "why survivals survive". Folk-lore, he said in answer, "explains facts in culture history rather than in political history"¹ and is governed "by its own laws . . . which are not the laws . . . of history".² Survivals, found among the backward and rural, and apprehended as impaired culture elements, owed their initial impairment to an historical event, the conquest of an indigenous, savage people. When invaded, the conquered group retreated to areas remote from those occupied by the conquerors. There, in hollows of the hills or sequestered villages, old ideas and practices were secretly cherished and maintained. But concealment within, an internal continuing force, and hostility from without, an external restraining force, conspired to divest the culture of the overborne and evicted, of the potentiality which characterizes undisturbed cultures. Natural growth was arrested. Impaired elements endured side by side with elements whose development had not been interrupted and survivals survived.

With this hypothesis, Gomme was permitted at one stroke to satisfy his taxonomic and historical interests. He could correlate repeated invasions into Britain of continental overflows with what he describes as age-differences in surviving culture elements. He could also formulate a scientific conception of the meaning of the term 'survival' in accordance with develop-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46. ² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

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mental anthropology. He could reaffirm the characteristics with which the surviving element had been endowed by his colleagues. He could envisage the survival, on the one hand, as experiencing life and undergoing dissolution ; but, on the other, as perpetuating itself after an event alien to the natural course of change in culture had terminated its viability.

IV

SURVIVALS AND SOCIAL ORIGINS : RELIGIOUS, LITERARY AND ECONOMIC.

I

THE second period in the history of the diffusion of the doctrine of survival was characterized by renewed interest in the old Tyloorean problem of the origin of religion, and by an attempt to overcome the difficulties involved in describing origins in Tyloorean terms of individual psychology by substituting for its presuppositions those implicit in theories of group mind. It was also an expansive period, deriving its particularity from the diversity of fields into which the doctrine of survivals was imported. And while the earlier spade-work of Lang and Gomme was being carried on by a younger group of folk-lorists such as Hartland, Frazer, and Marett, a group of classicists, such as Jane Ellen Harrison, Ridgeway, Gilbert Murray, and Cornford, discovered in the 'anthropological method' a means of extracting fresh conclusions from the exhausted mines of classical ore; a group of Mediterranean archæologists, such as Ramsay, Farnell, Hogarth, and Stanley A. Cook, employed the doctrine to arrive at quick and easy arrangements

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of newly excavated artifacts; and scattered students of literature and economics, such as Gummere and Veblen, extended the Tyloorean procedure to their respective fields of inquiry.

To this assemblage of scholars, whether students of the historical peoples of antiquity or the non-historical cultures of present-day savages, there was presented a decision of some importance. Were they to follow the versatile, combative but imitative Lang, or were they to adopt the procedures of the pains-taking, independent Gomme? Living in intimate intellectual association and functioning with reference to one intellectual inheritance, two men could not have been more different, nor the conclusions logically consequent upon their treatment of Tylor's doctrine of survivals more divergent. Lang had employed the doctrine in the study of mythology and religion, a field already well tilled by Tylor, to re-affirm with modifications, a Tyloorean theory of origins in individual psychology. Gomme, on the other hand, had not only used the doctrine to secure access to materials of which Tylor was but dimly aware; he had, with indefatigable industry, coerced them into taxonomic orderliness and employed them to postpone, if not to dismiss, the use of the comparative method, a technique Tylor himself had striven to defend. Lang, in other words, left the doctrine of survivals and the developmental theory of social change where he found

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it. Gomme endeavoured to account for the phenomena of survival, and to employ survivals to suggest a theory of cultural change contrary to the developmental theory, and based upon the use of dated historical materials.

The decision was not long in the making. Lang died in 1912, remembered by a host of admirers. Gomme passed from the scene a few years later, with brief official mention as an efficient civil servant, but without intellectual heirs. In accepting Lang rather than Gomme as the interpreter of Tylor, the younger men also either accepted religion as an institution of central interest to inquiry, or made it the source of the development of other institutions. With the possible exception of Gummere, Veblen, and a few others, the doctrine of survivals throughout the twentieth century has been employed almost exclusively in that field.

The history of the history of religion, however, is a record of the struggles of scholarship with unwieldy masses of material and theological preconceptions. Neither anthropologists nor folk-lorists, classicists nor archaeologists, even though well armed with the doctrine of survivals, could advance to the attack until they had met old controversies and settled them. The most formidable of these appertained to the question of the origin of religion, and found its most characteristic and divergent expression in the thought of the

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anthropologist, Tylor, and the orientalist, William Robertson Smith.

The work of both of these two great nineteenth-century figures was conducted against a background of parochial misinterpretation of primitive man and fear of the impairment of orthodox faith by the use of anthropological data. When, in the late sixties, Tylor began to write his chapters on animism in *Primitive Culture*, parish ethnology maintained that savages either had no religion, or, had lost what little they had once possessed. The acceptance of the former position somewhat increased the difficulty of maintaining a developmental conception of religious change; the acceptance of the latter, a phase of the theory of the degeneration of savagery, made it impossible. In order to re-establish the developmental hypothesis as applied to religion, the savage had not only to be studied with the scholar's detachment, but groomed for inclusion in the progressive series. He had not only to be put forward persuasively as the ancestor of European man in language and the material arts; he had also to be proven the possessor of religious concepts acceptable to communicants of Christian congregations.

Tylor's resolution of this conflict between polemical expediency and unencumbered inquiry was the theory of animism. In formulating it, he tacitly acknowledged that religion had two sides, known variously as

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creed and cult, or belief and practice, or dogma and ritual; the former of interest to theologians, the latter, to anthropologists. As an anthropologist, he could not be unmindful of the importance of the examination of savage ritual. In fact, he called it "the dramatic utterance of religious thought, the gesture language of theology." But the relative ease with which "accurate accounts of ceremonies" could be obtained seemed to him to obscure the logical and historical priority of belief to ritual, and the greater importance of securing "trustworthy and intelligible statements of doctrine". Influenced also by the attitude of mind within the Christian church resulting from centuries of study, he chose to assume that true religion precedes the religious act. The origin of the institution, therefore, was found by him in the animistic *ideas* of primitive people, "in their broad philosophy of nature, early and crude indeed, but thoughtful, consistent and quite really and seriously meant."¹

William Robertson Smith (1846-1894), writing about twenty years later, was a student of the Semitic origins of the Hebrew and Christian systems of religion. Without mentioning Tylor's name, he questioned all that was involved in Tylor's procedure of looking at religion from the side of creed rather than

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 2 (7th ed., New York, 1924) pp. 362-363.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 285.

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cult, and deplored the habit of regarding the *explanation* of the act, or dogma, as prior to the *act* itself, or ritual. He ascribed that habit of thought to the fact that "almost the only forms of religion which have attracted serious study" have been those of the various Christian Churches, wherein "controversies . . . have constantly turned on diversities of dogma, even when the immediate point of difference has been one of ritual." In forcible terms, he asserted that religion is not essentially a system of ideas, but a body of fixed and traditional practices.²

II

In their use of survivals within the boundaries of this controversy to arrive at the origin of religion, the younger anthropologists and folk-lorists, under the leadership of Lang, moved upon a somewhat erratic periphery of Tylor's position; while students of classical antiquity and Near Eastern archæologists leaned toward the conclusions of their fellow orientalist. Lang's treatment of the problem was Tyloorean in spirit, but was accompanied by highly individualized excursions into the field of psychic phenomena and a disposition to regard true religion as insusceptible to historical investigation. He agreed with Tylor in his

¹ William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. First Series. The Fundamental Institutions* (London, 1889), p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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blanket endowment of the savage with what Europeans were willing to call religious ideas. Dominated, however, by the presuppositions of rationalism, he questioned the "animistic hypothesis as an explanation of the whole fabric of religion". For he held it necessary to divide religious phenomena into two categories; first, the rational and true, innate in man as man, and appearing in all cultures in the form of a concept of a moral Supreme Being; and second, the irrational and distorted, arising out of the nebulous, wayward confusion of the savage mind, and appearing in myth. Possessing the qualities of universality and absolute truth, the rational aspect of religion left no room for developmental inquiry. The 'truth' might be learnt, but never critically examined as an entity subject to change and possessing a history. The irrational, on the contrary, appearing as legendary encrustations upon the true, was mutable and offered an appropriate field for historical inquiry. The total result of Lang's argument was to define religion out of existence as a changing entity, and subject, therefore, to the treatment of the developmentalist. He proposed to install in its place a 'science' of mythology, based upon the doctrine of survivals. The latter, he believed, would yield a description of that early stage of the human mind in which the survivals, or what is now irrational, once seemed "rational enough".

Frazer (1854—) and Marett (1866—), like Lang,

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dedicated themselves to typically Tyloorean quests, the prosecution of inquiries into primitive superstition and religion. Both adhered to the older anthropologist's conviction that religion is ultimately to be referred to psychology, to belief rather than ritual. But each again, like Lang, felt compelled to modify Tylor's theory of animism; Frazer, by pressing the problem of origins back to a pre-animistic and intellectualist¹ stage of magic; Maret, under the influence of changing emphases in psychological thought, by suggesting the need of a new category for religious rudiments of a non-animistic and emotional nature.²

The employment of survivals in achieving their respective purposes is taken for granted, especially by Frazer. In fact, his acute awareness of the rapidity with which primitive and peasant cultures were succumbing to the inroads of modern European influence, together with an antiquarian and romantic attitude toward village and agricultural practices, resulted in the publication of a work notable for its all-inclusive qualities as a collection of folk-lore materials, and its philosophical and methodological artlessness. *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915), a monumental assemblage and classification³ of survivals,

¹ Robert Ranulph Maret, *The Threshold of Religion* (2nd ed., London, 1914), p. x.

² Maret, *Psychology and Folk-lore* (London, 1920), p. 187.

³ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 10 (3rd ed., London, 1911-15), p. xi.

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could not have been written had not Tylor's doctrine, or its equivalent, been formulated. Yet neither in its text nor index does the author give indication of his realization of the significance of that fact. He was a collector of popular and primitive antiquities in the tradition of Brand and Bourne, consequently the controversies which had been a perennial source of disquietude to other students of culture seem to have had no existence for him. Throughout his work he maintained a position of lofty eclecticism in which definition of terms and methodological subtleties are subordinated to romanticism and poetic interpretation.

Marett, on the other hand, rebelled with some vigour against the antiquarianism which goes about collecting "odd bits" solely for the purpose of recovering the external stratification of culture. By setting up and answering the question "Why do survivals survive?" he professed to find in what is outwardly perceived as a body of custom something which may be inwardly and emotionally apprehended as the origin of religion in a phase of the folk-soul.¹

III

No group of students embraced the doctrine of survivals with greater enthusiasm than did the English

¹ Marett, as cited, p. 12.

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Hellenists of the last decade of the nineteenth century, and those archæologists who were then beginning to reap rich harvests on the sites of ancient Semitic, Mycenaean and Minoan civilizations. To the former in particular, the doctrine was both a tonic and an opportunity. For classical scholarship had for some time past been becalmed in more or less sterile enterprises of translation and esthetic appreciation. This condition was due in part to the central place accorded in the Greek studies to literary preoccupations. In part, also, it was the outcome of the inertia which had fallen upon the genetic study of the institutions of classical antiquity as the result of the failure of philology and conventional narrative history to clarify outstanding difficulties. "The strange contradiction in classical religion and art between ritualistic act and the more ideal view about divinity" remained unexplained. The conflict between the work of the painter and the sculptor, who as servants of the state could not break with the religious tradition familiar to the many, and the work of the poet who was free to express the refined ideas of the few, remained unresolved.¹ The Greek epic and drama as well as painting and sculpture were informed with religious meaning worked out through the medium of mythic story, incident and personality. At one moment, the myths

¹ Lewis Richard Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1896-1909), pp. 9-10.

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seemed to present the gods as embodying the highest spiritual qualities; at others, as reflecting the lowest levels of fetishism. The philologists' attempt to explain how deities got their names was a far call from the desired reconciliation of the noble in Greek religious thought with the orgiastic in Greek religious ceremonial. Historical convention which compelled the historian to accept Homer as the documentary solution of all controversy was equally unrewarding. For not only were the same contradictions found in the epic itself, but Homer had for some time been acknowledged as a culmination, rather than a beginning of a long history of intellectual and religious experience. Thus obstructed, the study of Greek religion, fundamental to all classical inquiry, had become "deserted territory",¹ "contemptuously ignored",² especially by English scholars.

The revival, through the introduction of the doctrine of survivals, or what classicists and archæologists called the method of anthropology, came, according to some, from reading Lang.³ Others gave credit to Frazer. But all were united in the triumphant conviction that the classics were turning in their long sleep. "We modernists," said one spokesman, "were, in truth, at times a 'people who sat in darkness', but we

¹ Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of the Greek Religion* (New York, 1912), pp. 5-6.

² Farnell, as cited, vol. 1, p. viii.

³ Murray, as cited, p. 5.

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were soon to see a great light. . . . Tylor had written and spoken; Robertson Smith . . . had seen the Star in the East; in vain; we classical deaf-adders stopped our ears and closed our eyes; but at the mere sound of the magical words *Golden Bough* the seals fell—we heard and understood.”¹ Once shaken from their “dogmatic slumbers”,² myths ceased to be regarded as problems to be solved. Hellenists, following the procedure of the developmentalist, began to scrutinize them as documents, and to employ them with other folk-lore materials as reflectors of “older and cruder ideas in petrifaction”.³ The attention of the historically-minded was deflected from repetitious reconstructions of the Homeric period, already recognized and discounted as far from primitive.⁴ The origin of poetry, the drama, painting and sculpture was no longer sought in earlier and similar classical Greek forms. Inquiry was shifted to the culture of those barbaric peoples who had dwelt in Hellenic lands at more remote times, and to the religion and ceremonial of contemporary savages. The gods themselves, when rejected as primary phenomena, came to be envisaged as “merely the personified shadow or dream”⁵ generated by something far more archaic,

¹ Jane Ellen Harrison, *Reminiscences of a Student's Life* (London, 1925), p. 83.

² G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (Oxford, 1907), p. 280, 1 n.

³ Farnell, as cited, vol. 1, p. 9.

⁴ Farnell, *Evolution of Religion; an Anthropological Study* (London, 1905), pp. 19–20.

⁵ Murray, *Four Stages of the Greek Religion*, p. 29.

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the emotion associated with the performance of primitive ritual.

With the repudiation of the esthetic and historical formulæ of the classical studies by the acceptance of anthropological and folk-lore materials, a new era began in both fields of study. Folk-lore and anthropology found in the classics an inexhaustible reservoir of primitive thought and practice. Classical scholarship discovered in anthropology and collections of survivals new materials for penetrating into a more ancient past, and a procedure for the reconstruction of classical social institutions in developmental terms.

Among the first English Hellenists to perceive and utilize the doctrine of survivals for arriving at Greek social origins was Jane Ellen Harrison (1850-1928). A student whose intellectual history was informed by hyper-susceptibility to all the newer trends in the humanistic studies, she mirrors the major currents of later nineteenth-century inquiry. Considering her sex and generation, her public life began appropriately with lectures on Greek art, "at that time booming and respectable".¹ Her earliest publications,² contemporaneous with those of Gomme and Lang, dealt with the myths of the *Odyssey* and ancient Athens as reflected in Greek art and vase painting. They were not

¹ Harrison, as cited, p. 51.

² *Myths of the Odyssey in Art and Literature* (London, 1882); *Introductory Studies in Greek Art* (London, 1885); *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London, 1890); *Greek Vase Paintings* (London, 1894).

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historical in objective. On the contrary, they were typical efforts, in the Aristotelian tradition, to afford discipline in taste and feeling, and to demonstrate that it was the mission of the Greek, through art, to teach the world the lessons of idealism. But much that found its way into print in these earlier books came to be regretted by their author as being docile and second-hand.¹

A few years later, following an inspection of Sir Arthur Evans' 'new Atlantis' in Crete,² Miss Harrison lost interest in the task of establishing the canons of esthetic appreciation. From the genetic standpoint, she also began to doubt the priority of art to other institutions, and "bit by bit," she tells us, "art and archæology led to mythology, mythology merged into religion; there I was at home."³ During this second period she published two books, *The Prolegomena to the Study of the Greek Religion* (1903), and *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of the Greek Religion* (1912). Both were candid attempts to effect a breach in conventional Homeric documentation of institutional origins. But more important, both were experiments in the employment of survivals to pull the Greek studies into line with developmental inquiries in other areas of humanistic study, and find beneath Homer's 'splendid surface' a 'primitive substr-

¹ J. E. Harrison, *Reminiscences*, p. 63.
² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

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tum¹ similar to contemporary savagery. In the earlier work the influence of Robertson Smith is obvious. The origin of Greek religion was ascribed to ritual rather than to thought, and the author sought to find in "what a people *does* in relation to the gods" a clue to "what it thinks".² During the subsequent decade, however, the charms of a new psychology began to cast its spell on English scholarship, and in *Themis*, Miss Harrison reversed her position in a Tyloorean direction but without a Tyloorean destination. Following Wundt and Durkheim, she merged the study of savagery with modern group psychology, and the origin of Greek religion was found, not in vestiges of the processes of the individual savage mind, but in the survivals of primitive collective emotion.³

The same psychological presuppositions were retained in Miss Harrison's last book, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (1913), in which she returned to her first intellectual interest. In this inquiry the problem of the origin of art and that of the origin of religion were merged. The common root of poetry, the dance, the drama and sculpture was found in savage life;⁴ primi-

¹ J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1909), p. vii.

² J. E. Harrison. "The Influence of Darwinism on the Study of Religion", *Darwinism and Modern Science*, edited by A. C. Seward (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 498-499.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 503.

⁴ J. E. Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (New York, 1913), p. 9.

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tive art growing out of primitive ritual,¹ both re-enacting collective emotion,² and transmitting to modern art and religion the survivals of their genesis in the group mind.³

The movement begun by Jane Ellen Harrison spread with such rapidity throughout the classical studies that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find scholars who were not equally convinced of the validity and fruitfulness of the anthropological method. Nevertheless, the problems set up for solution were not always problems of origin. Hence, the doctrine of survivals did not receive at the hand of all Hellenists and archæologists the same direct and unqualified use. Gilbert Murray (1866— —), for example, in *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (1907), made known⁴ to his readers that his debt to the *Prolegomena to the Greek Religion* would be visible on many pages. He regarded the anthropological method as a boon to Hellenists. But, choosing to discuss the epic as “a force in progress” rather than as the product of progressive change, he employed survivals as secondary and supporting evidence,⁵ not as a means of recovering the origin of any specific human enterprise.⁶ Lewis Richard Farnell (1856—1934), similarly, commended

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁴ G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 36, 46, 83, 181.

⁶ In his *Four Stages of the Greek Religion*, survivals are employed to recover the origins of religion, but in a blurred and tangential way.

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the anthropologists as "the first who attempted by scientific method to bring some order into the chaos of mythology".¹ But similarly also he debarred himself from the employment of Tylor's doctrine by disavowing an interest in the origin and lower² aspects of the Greek religion,³ and by finding his documentation of its early stages in the literature and monuments.⁴ Again, William Ridgeway (1853-1926) though elsewhere in procedure he followed Tylor, chose in *The Early History of Greece* (1901) to support his Pelasgian theory by an appeal to archæology, philology and anthropometry. Sir William M. Ramsey (1851-—),⁵ and other archæologists,⁶ wrested the doctrine of survivals from its Tyloorean context by confusing the geographical permanence of sacred altars and buildings with the persistence and 'fragmentation' of ideas and rituals. Apart from Miss Harrison's work, the most unequivocal examples in the classical studies of the employment of the doctrine of survivals for purposes of recovering the origins of Greek institu-

¹ Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. 1, p. 8.

² Farnell, *Higher Aspects of the Greek Religion* (London, 1912).

³ Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. 1, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 9. For Farnell on the subject of the survival of paganism, see his paper, "The presence of savage elements in the religion of cultured races. An application of the methods of anthropology to early Mediterranean civilization", *Hibbert Journal*, vol. 12 (1913-1914), pp. 804-818.

⁵ "The Permanence of Religion at Holy Places in Western Asia", in his *Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christian History* (2nd ed., London, 1908), pp. 161-188.

⁶ R. A. S. Macalister, *A History of Civilization in Palestine* (Cambridge, 1913), p. 39.

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tions are to be found in Ridgeway's *Origin of Tragedy* (1910), F. M. Cornford's *Origin of Attic Comedy* (1914), William Ward Fowler's *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911), and Martin P. Nilsson's two works on the origin of Greek religion in Minoan-Mycenaean culture.¹

IV

During the last decade of the nineteenth century the doctrine of survivals was welcomed, not only by students of religion and the institutions of Mediterranean antiquity, but also by inquirers in the field of comparative literature. This field, in a certain sense, was relatively new. But the problem set up for solution was an old one. As such, it was hedged about with controversy, which took its departure, on the one hand, from an aristocratic position, and on the other from the democratic presuppositions of eighteenth-century romanticism. Hence, before Francis Barton Gummere (1855-1919) could employ survivals to document a theory of literary origins, he was compelled, like other pioneering disciples of Tylor, to adjudicate between two rival claims. One of these was represented by those who found the source of literary expression in the invention of the individual

¹ *A History of the Greek Religion*, translated from the Swedish by F. F. Felden (Oxford, 1925); *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and its Survival in Greek Religion* (Lund, 1927).

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artist, the minstrel and the trappings of chivalry. The other had, as its exponents, those who followed Herder and Grimm back to the unlettered peasant, and ascribed poetry, in the ballad form,¹ to the poet-aggregate called the folk.² Given the prestige of Lang as a balladist and champion of the doctrine of survivals, together with the current ascendancy of the folk-psychologists, Wundt and Durkheim, with their group theories of social origins, Gummere's vote for the romantic school was practically pre-ordained.³ In concurrence with these students, he maintained in the spirit of Lang that "ballads . . . flit from age to age, from lip to lip of shepherds, peasants, nurses, all that class which continues nearest to the state of

¹ See argument for the priority of ballad to epic in the work of Walter Morris Hart, a student of Gummere's, in which the evidences of survivals are supplemented by indications of the simpler and more primitive characteristics of the earlier form. (Hart, *Ballad and Epic; a Study in the Development of Narrative Art* [Boston, 1907], p. 3.)

² A third group inspired by nineteenth-century diffusionism ascribed the ballad form to constant borrowings. (F. B. Gummere, "The Ballad and Communal Poetry", *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, vol. 5 [1896], pp. 41-56.)

³ Gummere's teacher and immediate predecessor in the field, Francis James Child (1825-1896) maintained a similar position, asserting, though with somewhat less vigour than Lang, that the ballad form is always "an expression of the mind and heart of the people as an individual, and never of the personality of individual men". ("Ballad Poetry", *Johnson's New Universal Cyclopædia*, vol. 1 [1876], p. 365.) See also Walter M. Hart, "Professor Child and the Ballad", in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, vol. 21 (1906), pp. 755-807. Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, deriving his theory of the development of literature from a study of Maine, Laveleye, von Maurer, and Nasse on the evolution of property and like them making an occasional mention of the presence of survivals, came to a similar conclusion as to the origin of poetry in group song and dance. (Posnett, *Comparative Literature*, [1886], p. 62.)

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natural man. . .”¹ And armed, as had been Garrison, Gomme, Nilsson and a host of others, with the authority of the ‘anthropological method’, he recovered the origins of the ballad by the use of folklore and materials derived from the observation of contemporary savagery.

His first experiment in the use of this procedure appeared in 1892 in a work entitled *Germanic Origins: A Study in Primitive Culture*. This was an effort to recover the culture of the Teutonic invader into Britain in order to decide for the student of English literature whether its forms were in the beginning Germanic or Romance.² In this work the author leaned heavily upon documentation by survivals,³ and their assumed similarity, especially in the field of religion, to the ideas and practices of existing savages. And in dealing with these materials the old argument as to the origin of religion, the priority of creed *versus* cult, was re-invoked.⁴

In the *Beginnings of Poetry* (1901), published nine years later, Gummere resolutely turned his back upon contemporary critical interest in the evaluation and defence of poetry, to engage upon its study “as a social institution”;⁵ a developmental enterprise invol-

¹ Lang, “The Ballad”, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 3, (1878), p. 285.

² Gummere, *Germanic Origins: A Study of Primitive Culture* (New York, 1892), p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 337.

⁵ Gummere, *Beginnings of Poetry* (New York, 1901), p. 1.

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ving inquiry into "its primitive stages, its actual beginnings".¹ In so doing, it was not his purpose to establish the ballad, in its nineteenth-century transcription, as the *origin* of poetry. But rather, regarding it as a link with "a primitive and frankly communal past",² he proposed to search it for documentary evidence, in the form of survivals, of an anterior savage and communal type of poetic expression. Following the procedure suggested by Tylor and used by Seebohm in his study of the village community, he uncovered this evidence by decomposing the ballad into its constituent communal elements, in diction, form and surroundings.³ It was his argument, supported by relevant materials drawn from the inspection of the choral activities of primitive peoples and "shards of communal verse" found in ethnological material, that the further back these elementary communal fragments were traced, the less they reflected the individual artist as first poet, the more they indicated the choral and group character of early poetic expression. Ballads, regarded as an historian's treasure house of distorted and mutilated vestiges of the past, with their acknowledged association with singing, dancing, universal improvisation and predominant chorus or refrain, seemed to him to lead back not to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

² Gummere, "Primitive Poetry and the Ballad", *Modern Philology*, vol. 1, (1903-1904), pp. 193-202, 217-234, 373-390.

³ Gummere, *Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 189.

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a primitive bard, but to the activities of the savage horde. "At the end of the path," he asserted, "we see no dignified old gentleman in flowing robe, with a long white beard, upturned eyes, and a harp clasped to his bosom, but rather a ring of savages dancing uncouthly to the sound of their own voices in rhythmic but inharmonious chant."¹

V

Although a case might be made in favour of earlier investigators, the responsibility for the introduction of the doctrine of survivals into economic inquiry must be laid upon the shoulders of Frederic Seebohm (1833-1912),² the English student of the institution of property and the village community.³ In attempting to recover early property relationships and ancient

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 347. For other examples of the employment of survivals in the study of the development of literature see William Ridgeway, *Origin of Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1910); A. S. Mackenzie, *The Evolution of Literature* (New York, 1911); R. G. Moulton, *The Modern Study of Literature* (Chicago, 1915); *The Ancient Classical Drama* (Oxford, 1890); F. M. Cornford, *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (London, 1914).

² *The English Village Community, Examined in Relation to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry; an Essay in Economic History* (London, 1883); *The Tribal System in Wales: Being a Part of an Inquiry into the Structure and Methods of Tribal Society* (London, 1902); *Customary Acres and Their Historical Importance* (London, 1914); see also Hugh Exton Seebohm, *On the Structure of Greek Tribal Society: An Essay* (London, 1895).

³ See also G. L. Gomme, *The Village Community with Special Reference to the Origin and Form of its Survivals in Britain* (London, 1890); Paul Vinogradoff, *Villeinage in England* (Oxford, 1892); *Growth of the Manor* (London, 1905); *English Society in the Eleventh Century* (Oxford, 1908).

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law, Nasse, von Maurer, Maine and many others had examined and utilized what they called traces or vestiges of earlier forms. But some of these scholars worked before the final formulation of Tylor's doctrine and therefore cannot be charged with its employment, while others, though influenced by Tyloorean terminology failed to make their procedure conform with the 'anthropological method'.¹ As a matter of fact, by describing his method in tentative and general terms as that of proceeding from the known to the unknown, even Seebohm leaves something to be desired in methodological clarity. But judging from internal evidence, the conclusion becomes unavoidable that he was a developmentalist in the Tyloorean sense of the word, and regarded ancient legal codes, literatures, and contemporary systems of land-tenure² as reservoirs of survivals, ready to be used for documentary purposes once the comparative method was invoked.

Seebohm's point of departure, a common one among historians of economic institutions, was the question as to whether the modern European economic structure, based upon private property in land,

¹ On Sir Henry Maine the effect of Tylor's terminology is plain. Before 1871, he refers vaguely to *traces* and *vestiges*. During subsequent years he used the word *survival* frequently, and in 1875, even introduced it into the index of *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*, a practice so uncommon as to deserve remark.

² Frederick Seebohm, *English Village Community*, p. xiv; *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law*, p. viii.

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was the outcome of a servile and propertyless condition of the masses ; or, the result of an original form of social organization in which property, by general consent, was owned by the group. Answered in one way, the evolution of economic institutions received an interpretation as a movement from non-ownership and servitude among the masses to private property and freedom. Answered in another, the origin of society in its economic aspects, like the origin of religion and literature in the hands of social psychologists, was communal in character, and social development a gradual unfoldment of acquisitiveness and individualism expressed in economic relationships.

Seeböhm, however, in spite of his conviction that the economic present is the outcome of a communal past,¹ declined to overreach his documents and dwell on the problem of origins. Accepting as essentially correct that developmental reconstruction in which the pastoral stage precedes the agricultural, he professed to find in the open-field system of land-tenure the 'eccentric' shell, not of the first stage of nomadic shepherd life, but that of early tillers of the soil. And with these survivals, and supporting evidence from ancient codes, he concentrated his attention upon the recovery of the structure and economic activities of

¹ For a criticism of this theory and its historical derivation, see *The Origin of Property*, by Fustel de Coulanges, translated by Margaret Ashley, with an introductory chapter on the English manor, by W. J. Ashley (1891).

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the second or tribal stage of development, with its central institution, the communal village community.

An inquiry remotely resembling Seebohm's, was recently conducted in America by the economist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) whose peculiarities of style and employment of commonplace developmental assumptions unfamiliar to exponents of classical economic theory earned for him, strangely enough, the title of founder of a new school of institutional economics. Prepared by his reading of students of the institution of property, Veblen's work began appropriately with an early paper on *The Beginnings of Ownership*. His treatment differed from that of Seebohm, Maine and others of the communal school not in method, but solely in the fact that the idea of property was denied to the first stage of social development, and located in a subsequent stage of barbarism as a "concomitant of the transition from a peaceable to a predatory habit of life".¹

Dissatisfied, however, with the restricted scope of a question which concerned the origin of but one economic institution and desiring, furthermore, to bring economic inquiry into closer conformity with the Marxian analysis and the evolutionary procedure of natural science, Veblen began to expand his problem and to project his studies against a wider ethical and

¹ Thorstein Veblen, "The Beginnings of Ownership", *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 4 (1899), pp. 358, 362.

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sociological horizon. Following Marx, he envisaged European society as divided, on the basis of ownership, into two antithetical categories, the industrial and the pecuniary. The industrial, Veblen described as characterized by preference for the workmanlike, the constructive, and the socially useful; the pecuniary, by distaste for the ideals of craftsmanship, inclination for personal acquisition and accumulation, and a preference for non-utilitarian and prestige-bearing activities.¹ Following, in addition, that line of thought which apprehends human activity as the outcome of prior standards of value, and these in turn, as the product of change in past time, Veblen found himself confronted with a problem in economic ethics rather than in economic practice. His subsequent inquiries, accordingly, took the form of an effort to arrive, not at the sources of wealth-getting activities, but at the origins of practices leading, on the one hand, to industrial efficiency and the collective good, on the other, to personal aggrandizement and social waste.

Again, prepared by his reading of ethnologists and folklorists, Veblen dealt with this dual problem in accordance with the procedure of the Tyloorean school of anthropology. In other words, he envisaged the social whole, and its two major divisions, as the outcome of a developmental process, subject to demon-

¹ Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York, 1922), *passim*.

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stration and documentation by the use of the comparative method and the employment of survivals. In describing the original social state, he projected in modern business terminology a description, similar to Locke's, of the lowest level of contemporary savagery¹ as undifferentiated, unaggressive, possessed of a love of truth and equality, a preference for the socially useful, an unformulated sense of group solidarity, and, psychologically anterior to all else, an aptitude, propensity or instinct of workmanship.

It is plain to the reader, however, that since the code accepted by the modern industrial category embraced principles of which Veblen approved, it was identified by him with the fundamental and immutable elements of human nature itself and, thus, withdrawn from consideration as a product of change. In fact, Veblen asserted that the canon of workmanship had been cherished and perpetuated by society as the most ancient and necessary standard of values, the code of the noble savage; and was subject to genetic explanation only by an appeal to psychology and the study of the instinctive equipment of human beings.

In endeavouring, on the contrary, to recover the origin of the pecuniary canon, Veblen dealt with standards of action which did not receive his endorse-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6. Veblen, *The Instinct of Workmanship* (New York, 1918), p. 101.

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ment, and which to him were not in accord with the necessary and unalterable principles of life in society. Unlike Seebohm, Maine, and others, who found the origin of property in some form of primitive collectivism, he was unable to conceive of ownership in other than individual terms. Property, the sign manual of the leisure class, was to him not the outcome of group use and participation, but of individual aggression and self-assertion. It was incompatible with the condition of primary primitive peacefulness and goodwill. Ethically secondary, the leisure class code, therefore, became identified in his mind with an undesirable change in the primitive and propertyless standard of value. Accordingly, he established its origin, not in the first stage of human social development, not as coincident with the appearance of society and the industrial canon, but in a second and barbaric stage of social development. The latter stage, in turn, was regarded as concurrent with the origin of ownership as an institution and the acceptance of aggression as an accredited form of social action. In dealing with the problem of the development of European society as bisected into categories, Veblen thus arrived at a developmental series of three stages; an original stage of somewhat communistic peacefulness, a second stage of predatory barbarism, and a final one of civilization.

Since, according to Veblen, it was in the pecuniary

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category rather than the industrial that change was manifested, the use of survivals as a means of recovering origins, appears in only one volume, that devoted to the discussion of the development of the canon of the leisure class. Here, in spite of the tendency to confuse the doctrine of survival with the survival of the fittest,¹ his indebtedness to anthropology and folk-lore is clear. For the surviving elements chosen and employed for purposes of reconstruction were found where Tylor and folklorists sought them, in the relics of barbaric warfare,² in the duel,³ the war games of children,⁴ on the sporting field,⁵ at the gaming table, in the belief of luck,⁶ in religious ritual,⁷ and in the evidences of the persistence of paganism.⁸ Veblen diverges from the Tylorean methodological formula in only one significant respect. He finds his documentary clues, not among the rural and unlettered, shielded from change by their remoteness from urban life, but among wealthy city-dwellers, especially women and clergy, who, according to his analysis, have clung to the practices of barbarism in the shelter afforded by the possession of property and surplus.⁹

A few pages on cultural survivals, published by William Fielding Ogburn (1886—) in the course of

¹ Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, pp. 215, 226.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 247-249.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 250-255.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 276-292.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 333 f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 255-263, 270-275.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-331.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 336-337.

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an essay on *Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature* (1922) seem to conclude their employment in the study of economic institutions, and reflect more or less accurately the relation of Tylor's doctrine to current inquiry in the study of man.

A social statistician, Ogburn was forced by an interest in certain immediate problems of administrative reform¹ to inquire "why social change occurs, why certain conditions apparently resist change, how culture grows, how civilization has come to be what it is", and whether or not change in culture is anterior, posterior, or parallel to biological mutation?² The essay in which these questions are put is, therefore, by no means an effort to reconstruct the history of any specific social institution. Nor does Ogburn, except in passing, refer to survivals as documents for the recovery of social origins.³ Accepting every tenet of eighteenth-century developmentalism, Ogburn's interest is focused upon the presence of different rates of social change, their sources in the divergent nature of cultural materials, and their aftermath in terms of temporary social 'maladjustments'. Resting on the familiar assumption that change in culture, like growth in the organism, is inherent in the nature of things, purposeful and progressive, he maintains the

¹ William Fielding Ogburn, *Progress and Uniformity in Child-labour Legislation; a Study in Statistical Measurement* (New York, 1912).

² Ogburn, *Social Change With Respect to Culture and Original Nature* (New York, 1922), pp. v-vi.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

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thesis "that the various parts of modern culture are not changing at the same rate";¹ that the non-material—or the administrative and moral—lags behind the material—or the industrial and technological. His discussion of survivals appears in response to questions derived from this thesis. He asks, for example, "Why is it so difficult to change culture for those who wish to make progress? Is it due to any resisting quality in culture? Or is it due to habits in human beings that resist social change?"² His answer is to be found in his assertion that survivals, as conspicuous and typical examples of resistance to change, owe their longevity to utility, serving different psychological needs at different times.³ While the persistence of cultural forms as a whole is ascribed by him to human indolence, difficulties of invention and diffusion, the economic power of vested interests to resist change, the weight of tradition, habit, and social pressure; all are generalizations upon limited observation, rather than the result of extensive study of either the old or new in culture.

In other words, if Ogburn be read aright, the problem of social change has not yet been solved. The facts of social permanence have not been met. A methodological parting of the ways is at hand. Students of human institutions will soon again find

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-159.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-190.

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themselves in an intellectual situation comparable to that which confronted Tylor in 1871 when, instead of making a fresh start on valid presuppositions, the doctrine of survivals, itself an inference from the comparative method, was invoked to reinforce its crumbling foundations.

*

V

THE REVIVAL OF DOUBT: CRITICS AND REVISIONISTS

I

IN appraising Edward Burnett Tylor it becomes apparent that he filled the rôle of a conserving rather than an innovating figure. He directed his efforts toward patching rents in the eighteenth-century methodological fabric rather than toward attacking the problem of differences in culture from a new point of view. Although he was less ready than many of his intellectual generation to accept all similarities in culture as of equal evidential value in the reconstruction of the early history of man, there were other old methodological ideas to which he loyally adhered. With his contemporaries, he accepted the idea of progress or development and employed the comparative method. With them, he utilized clues afforded by excavated artifacts. Like them, too, his attention was caught by the irrational but tenacious character of some beliefs and practices; this he ascribed to their greater age and their derivation without development from savage ancestors. The identification between what was regarded as the functionless old among ad-

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vanced peoples and non-material culture elements among backward groups, he accepted as suggested by predecessors. For purposes of reconstruction, he likewise made articulate the identification between folklorist materials and the archæologist's discoveries of ancient earthenware, stone and metal objects.

It is of interest to note, further, that even after committing himself to the guidance of archæology Tylor, the folk-lorist, could not remain rigidly faithful to the analogy. Survivals of non-material culture in the strict sense of the doctrine were dead matter, mental fragments broken off from mental structures. In his mind, however, they could not so remain. The claims of a still more ancient concept, that of motion or change modelled on organic growth, tempted the writer, if not the thinker, to speak of them as "rudimentary", "germinal", "living-on", or "out-living" other elements. The choice of the word 'survival' as a taxonomic device is another illustration of the same influence. Tylor recognized that the presence of an old ritual, an old superstition, or an old folk-tale sets up a problem of persistence which does not arise in connection with old artifacts made of stone or other durable material. The architect's and the archæologist's classifactory use of the term 'vestigial' failed to meet this need. But the term 'survival', with its implication of a potentiality to over-live the mortal span of life, tempted and won him.

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Tylor's contribution in terms of the doctrine of survivals resolves itself, therefore, into the reiteration of assumptions which for several centuries had lain side by side in thought, if not in synthesis. And the popularity of the newly christened, if far from new-born, doctrine was in no wise arrested by Darwin's dramatic but different use of the same term.

In evaluating the conclusions of Tylor's colleagues and successors in the field of the history of social institutions, it becomes apparent that since the sixties of the last century, all major work stands or falls upon the validity of the doctrine of survivals. Strip McLennan of his 'symbols', Morgan of his Hawaiian 'remains', Robertson Smith, Engels, Starke, and Rivers of their 'survivals', and the theories of the origin of the family so painfully constructed by them, fall to the ground. Divest Frazer, Marett, Harrison, and a host of other anthropologists and classicists of their assumption that the irrational in idea and act constitutes a mutilated legacy from a savage past, and their theories, which find the source of religion in individual or collective psychology, break down. Deprive Gummere and other students of the evolution of literary forms of their "shards of communal verse", and the primitive horde disappears as the primordial poetic artist. Deny Seebohm his conception of ancient codes as reservoirs of 'traces' of primitive ownership, or Veblen of his 'relics', and their theories

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of the origin of private property in the communal village community or in a stage of predatory barbarism are without foundation.

What, then, have been the arguments brought forward in support of the continued employment of survivals for the recovery of social origins? To what criticisms and revision has the procedure been subject?

In answering these questions, it should be remembered that the doctrine of survivals was elaborated three generations ago to meet an intellectual impasse which jeopardized not only the comparative method but the whole intellectual structure erected by eighteenth-century thought for the solution of the problem of differences in culture. To some scholars, aware of the difficulty of breaking new methodological ground, it offered security against the crumbling of a traditional system of ideas. To others, harassed by the ever-increasing mass of undigested materials, it extended the promise of control. The literature contains, therefore, no sustained argument in support of the doctrine. While reluctant disapproval of some specific metaphorical facet has occasionally been voiced, doubters have been unwilling to follow their doubts to the bitter destructive end. Furthermore, the majority of inquirers have been far too absorbed in the problem of recovering origins to justify the new-found procedure. The desire to consolidate the

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gains of eighteenth-century predecessors has inhibited thorough-going self-examination, and criticism has taken the form of groping uneasiness rather than rigid logical analysis.

As might well be expected, critical interest was notably absent among those who, like Lang and Gomme, were the first to import the doctrine into specialized fields of inquiry. Indeed, it may well be doubted if the doctrine could ever have secured a footing in the social studies without these two as transmitting agents. The charm, vivacity and adroitness of Lang, the industry, taxonomic and analytical power of Gomme were pledged to its service. Yet there is no evidence in their work that the doctrine was ever suspected of harbouring doubtful or untenable ideas. In fact, the figures of speech employed with more or less uneasiness by Tylor to conceal difficulties, seemed to both to be the scrupulously just expression of scientific ideas and to err, if at all, on the side of metaphorical conservatism. In order to strengthen Tylor's exposition of the doctrine, Lang embroidered the identification of old idea and old artifact with still richer geological and archæological imagery. The quaint superstitions of the peasantry and the less attractive practices of savagery were repeatedly presented by him as "fossils of rite and creed", like flint tools, rude in shape and "scattered everywhere in all continents and isles" or lying un-

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noticed but "close to the surface of civilized life".¹ Similarly Gomme, with all his critical powers, seemed unwilling to question the doctrine itself, and restricted his analytical effort to the classification of survivals as documents. He differed from Lang in only one respect. Instead of yielding to geological imagery he emphasized biological metaphor. He envisaged cultural change as organic in character, and ascribed survivals or functionless culture elements to arrested development. As for other employers of the doctrine in their several fields of interest—as for Jane Ellen Harrison and her colleagues among the Hellenists, as for Gummere in literature, Seeböhm and Veblen in economics, or Frazer, Marett, Rivers, and a legion of humbler figures—the reader will look in vain for methodological uncertainty.

It was only when the young successors of these pioneers began to reflect upon the presuppositions underlying their procedure that occasional disparagement of the doctrine appeared. Among these, the most common criticism took its departure from what was regarded as poetic licence in the use of geological and archæological simile. The reconstruction of the mental life of early man on the model afforded by the earth-sciences² was frequently challenged and often

¹ Andrew Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), pp. 11–13.

² W. H. R. Rivers, "Survival in Sociology", *Sociological Review*, vol. 6 (1913), p. 304; "Sociology and Psychology", in his *Psychology and Ethnology*, edited with preface and introduction by G. Elliot Smith (London, 1926), pp. 346–368.

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positively opposed. Cook,¹ Crawley,² Marett, Briffault and others refused to regard surviving ideas and acts, however meaningless, as so much broken wreckage cast on one side by advancing culture. They denied that the mass of people was to be thought of as "a quarry, a conglomerate of the remains of lost habits of thought". They questioned the assumption that savagery had persisted among contemporary peasants in the form of bits of "fossilized thinking" from which the student might aspire to build up a science of "paleo-ideology or paleontological-psychology".³

Implicit in the argument of such critics, though not necessarily so stated, was a protest against offering as an explanation of phenomena in one field of scientific inquiry that which, in another, had never been more than a description of the tangible, physical qualities of its subject-material. They deprecated an explanation of the persistence of non-material culture elements which endowed them figuratively with the physical endurance of the material. They inferred that the maintenance of old ideas could not be ascribed to the same inherent factors which had led to the preservation of petrified organic remains,

¹ Stanley Arthur Cook, *The Study of Religions* (London, 1914), pp. 55, 288 *1 n.*

² A. E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose; a Study of Primitive Marriage*, revised and enlarged by Theodor Besterman (London, 1932), p. 3.

Antonio Machado y Alvarez, "The Science of Folk-lore", *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. 3 (1885), pp. 110-114. See also William Crooke, "Method of Investigation of Folk-lore Origins", *Folk-lore*, vol. 24 (1913), p. 29.

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namely, the enduring quality of stone as stone. "It would appear," said Marett, "that inasmuch as survivals survive they are not quite dead after all." Favouring the substitution of biological metaphor, he and others asserted that "folk-lore is no study of the dead-alive" preserved accidentally and partially, but of the living as manifested in the so-called surviving. "The life of the folk, like the wild plant it is", was better envisaged "as constituting the germ plasm of society",¹ and persisting because it was "harder than the life in civilization".

On the other hand, in spite of the authority of Darwinism in the social sciences, the envisagement of cultural survivals by an appeal to biological simile also met with opposition. Unfamiliar with the history of methodological ideas and ignoring the archæological source of the doctrine, Hogarth claimed that even the choice of the word 'survival' was unfortunate; believing it to be imported from the medical studies, he regretted its trailing associations with the effete, pathological, or even dead.² With Cook, he pointed out that even in medicine "the belief that certain organs of the body are useless and functionless has

¹ Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A Study of the Origin of Sentiments and Institutions*, vol. 1 (New York, 1927) pp. 78-81. R. R. Marett, "Folk-lore and Psychology," *Folk-lore*, vol. 25 (1914), pp. 25-33; "The Transliteration of Value," *Folk-lore*, vol. 29 (1917-18), pp. 16-17.

² David George Hogarth, "Religious Survivals," *Report of the 77th Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, at Leicester (1907), p. 631.

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sometimes proved . . . to rest on imperfect observation ".¹

Occasional resistance to the doctrine of survivals did not end, however, with opposition to the exaggeration of picturesque fictions borrowed from other fields of scientific inquiry. It was realized that since Tylor's procedure was formulated to facilitate the recovery of an ancient level of cultural development, its use required a nice distinction between the new and old, the just selection within advanced culture of those elements which, on account of age and antiquity, could be regarded as possessing documentary significance. With this problem of discrimination in mind, the more acute commentators questioned the accepted grounds of selection. As a result, the most cogent body of criticism was directed at the criteria adopted for winnowing the surviving and old from among the developing and new. Persistent dissatisfaction was expressed, for example, by those who rebelled against the identification of the old in culture with the practices and ideas of merely one group in the civilized community, namely, the folk. Still others rejected a corollary of this basic criterion, or the identification of the practices of the modern European peasant with those of the contemporary savage. Not a few deplored the antiquarian confusion of the old in culture with

¹ S. A. Cook, "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," in *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway*, edited by E. C. Quiggin (Cambridge, 1913), p. 385, n. 1.

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that which was merely curious, rare, quaint, or irrational. And finally, some denied that culture elements or documents, selected on such grounds, could be regarded as necessarily survivals of the same level of development, reminiscent of the same segment of the past.

To assert that users of the doctrine of survivals identified the old in culture with the unlettered masses and sought for documentation of social origins solely among the ignorant and rural, is not to ignore the fact that from the earliest times¹ a few students have associated old ideas and practices with other levels of society. In fact, many recent commentators have refused to restrict their inquiries concerning the culturally old to the ignorant masses. "The populace," said d'Alviella, ". . . has not a monopoly on survivals."² They are often to be found among "the church-attending, sacrament-observing, and tolerably well-educated people—people, too, who necessarily participate in all the advantages of the advanced civilization of their country."³ Influences inhibiting change have been said to "radiate not only from the social mass but also from certain centres of extraor-

¹ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, tr. by Henry Dale (New York, 1891), I. 6.

² Eugène F. A. Goblet d'Alviella, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of the Conception of God as illustrated by Anthropology and History*, tr. by P. H. Wicksteed (London, 1892), p. 34.

³ Arthur Mitchell, *The Past in the Present. What is Civilization?* (New York, 1881), p. 146.

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dinary prestige and influence."¹ Tradition is often said to be strongest among the aristocratic classes and those who have been subjected to long intellectual training.² It is alleged that certain callings, urban, as well as rural, foster the retention of ancient customs and practices which have died out among members of "the bulk of the population."³ The economist, Veblen, in dealing with the origin and evolution of the leisure class as a pecuniary and capitalistic phenomenon, found all of his materials among the city-born and bred.

To the members of the Folk-Lore Society, however, as to the generations of collectors of popular antiquities preceding them, it seemed self-evident that a high and significant correlation obtained between the agriculturist, the peasant, the villager, the unlettered, the simple, the rustic, the average man, or the folk, on the one hand; and the old, the static, the culturally tenacious and the conservative, on the other. In Frazer's fine phrase, "literature accelerates the advance of thought at a rate which leaves the slow progress of opinion by word of mouth at an im-

¹ Edward Alsworth Ross, *Social Control; a Survey of the Foundations of Order* (New York, 1881) p. 30.

² Franz Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life* (New York, 1928), pp. 181, 189-193. Adolph Harnack. *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, translated and edited by James Moffat, vol. 2 (London, 1904-05), p. 118.

³ Alexander H. Krappe, *The Science of Folk-lore* (New York, 1930), p. xviii. See also Paul Sébillot, *Légendes et Curiosités des Métiers* (Paris, 1895).

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measurable distance behind. Two or three generations of literature may do more to change thought than two or three thousand years of traditional life. But the mass of people who do not read books remain unaffected by the mental revolution wrought by the literature; . . . beliefs and practices which have been handed down by word of mouth are generally of a more archaic type than the religion depicted in the most ancient literature of the Aryan race.”¹

When, therefore, Tylor found himself confronted with the task of indicating with some definiteness the cultural terrain most likely to yield documentary material in the form of survivals, he adopted as significant not only the occupational and educational classification set up by earlier collectors, but also the cultural items which they had selected within these categories. With a brevity of statement eloquent of the obviousness of the choice, he directed inquirers concerning survivals or the old, to the same social soil which had already been turned so many times by previous spades. He pointed to the agricultural content of ancient prayers, to children’s games, to old wives’ tales, to feastings, dramatic pantomime, the dance and song.² Gomme, likewise, looked for his materials in the village community and the hearth cult. Frazer

¹ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 1 (2nd ed., London, 1911–15), p. xii. See also William Ridgeway, *The Early Age of Greece*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1901), p. 405.

² E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 2 (7th ed. New York, 1924), p. 370.

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sought them in harvest rite and peasant festival. Gummere turned to the poetry of yokel and farm boy. It was, indeed, the conviction of all the collectors of survivals that while kings have come and gone, "the peasant is eternal and unchangeable." Nevertheless, even within these limits, they did not look for the most ancient elements of human experience in the prosaic, onerous and matter-of-fact aspects of seed-time and harvest. On the contrary, they seem to have been persuaded that useful labour was an activity subsequent in time to pleasure-yielding ceremonial. They held, in effect, that "the body is decked before it is clothed." For the most part, therefore, survivals were sought in ancient rituals, myths, and beliefs which were fundamentally playful, festive, aesthetic or joy-producing.

The first evidence of an undercurrent of criticism directed at the identification of the old with the lower and rural classes, as a means of segregating survivals from other culture elements, appeared among the members of the Folk-Lore Society. It took the form of dissatisfaction with the concept of the folk. The debate began as early as 1885, when Antonio Machado y Alvarez expressed some discontent with the notion of a universal cleavage dividing human beings into two categories. "The very idea of the people as an undifferentiated and anonymous mass presupposes," said he, "a differentiation with human-

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ity . . . rationally posterior to the appearance of the latter on our globe." But as far as he was concerned, scepticism was soon set at rest by an inquiry into the etymology of the word 'folk'. The existence in German, Latin, Spanish, and English of similar terms, referring, not to the whole humanity, but to an anonymous portion of the human race not yet arrived by reflection and by culture at a full consciousness of itself, seemed to justify a differentiation, at least for the purposes of study.¹ A few years later another folk-lorist complained that, while much had been said about "what the Folk believed" and "what the Folk did", nothing at all had been said "as to what the Folk was that said and did these things". The fear was expressed that the Folk might be "a fraud, a delusion, a myth", to clothe the ignorance of investigators.²

But the most telling criticism of the concept came from students of the ballad. Ker deprecated the widely accepted and unsupported dogma "that there is always a 'people' or populace distinct from the gentry. . . . Different nations have different kinds of populace, and some have none at all. It is possible," said he, pointing to Iceland and Wales as areas of interest to students of literature, "for a nation to be

¹ Antonio Machado y Alvarez, "The Science of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. (1885), pp. 108-109. See also Edwin Sidney Hartland, "Science of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. 3 (1885), pp. 116-120.

² Joseph Jacobs, "The Folk," *Folk-lore*, vol. 4 (1893), pp. 233-234.

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gentle all through—‘the Quality’ not a separate caste from ‘the Quantity’.”¹ Again, Louise Pound, the vigorous critic of Gummere’s theory of the communal origin of poetic expression, which she stigmatized as “demagogic admiration for the undifferentiated *demos*”, was even more forcible in her denunciation of the effort to interpret “the folk”. She described it as a hybrid term derived from German group psychology and the political terminology of the Parisian commune. She commended Professor Child for preferring safer concepts, and insisted that literary historians would do well not only to abandon the idea of the folk but “to give less conspicuous place to the now hopelessly misused term ‘communal’.”²

Disturbed in the even tenor of their criticisms of the concept of the folk as an archive of cultural antiquities, a few scholars also found themselves uneasy in the presence of its corollary, the identification of the peasant with the savage. It was realized, logically speaking, that if the rites and pastimes of rural Europe were to be employed for the documentation of institutional origins, three prior propositions had first to be accepted. It was necessary to postulate the persistence of such elements in an essentially unchanged

¹ William Paton Ker, “On the History of the Ballads, 1100–1500,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1909–10), p. 195.

² Louise Pound, “The Term ‘Communal,’” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 39 (1924), p. 454. See also her *Poetic Origins and the Ballad* (New York, 1921), *passim*; and Krappe, as cited, pp. xvii–xviii.

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or mutilated form from a savage past. It was necessary to demonstrate that the savage past of the European rustic was a facsimile of the culture of contemporary primitive peoples. And finally, it was indispensable to endow both peasant and primitive culture with uniformity.

These propositions the more methodologically alert found hard to concede. For it was obvious that rural Europe was separated from a savage way of life by a vast stretch of time during which it had been exposed to repeated contacts with city-bred populations.¹ Could it be safely assumed that in the course of ten or twenty centuries during which the armies, traders, and missionaries of urban culture had repeatedly traversed Europe, the village way-of-life had suffered no alteration? Or, if alteration was admitted, could it be successfully maintained that change had taken place only in the direction of mutilation and decay, never in the direction of elaboration and betterment? Moreover, it was maintained by Hartland and others, that the memory of the illiterate was suffused with imagination and notable for historical inaccuracy. Oral tradition, as one of the processes of transmitting the old in culture from generation to generation, was described as shifting and uncertain.² That being the

¹ Krappe, as cited, p. xviii.

² E. S. Hartland, *Folk-lore; What It Is and What Is the Good of it?* (2nd ed., London, 1904), pp. 6-10; "On the Evidential Value of the Historical Traditions of the Baganda and Bushongo," *Folk-lore*, vol. 25 (1914), pp. 429-435.

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case, there could be no assurance that correspondences between folk-ways and savage-ways were other than accidental and fortuitous. Even were the modern savage assumed to be really primitive—a statement repeatedly denied¹—the lore of the folk could not be regarded as a perpetuation of primitive activities, nor peasant culture projected as a manifestation of the same stage of development. In addition, critics of the identification of the European rustic with primitive man, such as William Crooke, pointed to the lack of uniformity in savage cultures as an obstacle to legitimate correlations. They cited Darwin's observation that "savages, even within the limit of the same tribe, are not nearly as uniform in character as had often been asserted."² Gomme and Frazer, facing the difficulty, found themselves compelled to find a link between the peasant and the savage by appealing to an Aryan theory of European origins.

But protests against the over-confidence of folklorists in restricting the search for survivals to the masses were not all. Occasional dissent was also registered against the uncritical acquiescence of the historian of institutions in the selective criteria of antiquarianism and rationalism. Antiquarians, as collectors and students of the old in culture, had long assumed that the longevity of an object or idea was

¹ Franz Boas, *Primitive Art* (Oslo and Cambridge, 1927), pp. 6-7.

² William Crooke, "The Scientific Aspects of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore*, vol. 23 (1912), p. 24.

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to be correlated with its rarity, non-conformity, and quaintness. Selectors of survivals, when animated by this concept, held that relatively silly and frivolous activities practised infrequently by small rural groups in the civilized community were once widespread and invested with serious import. This argument from *curiosae* was attacked as unsubstantiated and indefensible. For, as Maitland maintained, there was no evidence that what was now abnormal ever had been normal. On the contrary, it was quite within the realm of possibility that the curio, whether potsherd or institution, had "always been a curio . . . from first to last as unique a thing as any thing can be in this imitative world."¹ Similarities between civilized and backward peoples were held to be unreliable evidence of historical relationship, since, in one or another culture, the similar idea or practice might well be merely a local 'sport'. A like position was adopted by many students of the institutions of marriage and the family. Upon what grounds, they asked, could McLennan assume that his symbols of marriage by capture, so rare in advanced culture, were, on that account, evidence of the universality of capture in

¹ F. W. Maitland, "The Survival of Archaic Communities," in *The Collected Papers of Frederick William Maitland*, ed. by H. A. L. Fisher, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1911), pp. 353-354; also pp. 313-315, 361-363.

"Ethnology consists of something more than the collection of curiosities. The time has gone by when we can expect people to collect folklore, or any other kind of ethnological data, on account of its quaintness and picturesqueness." (G. Elliot Smith, "Introduction" in W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926, p. xix).

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the past? Upon what grounds, further, was it to be assumed that symbols or survivals could be traced to a single source? It was far more likely, said Howard and Westermarck, that such practices took their rise in a variety of causes. It was generally agreed that although capture and promiscuity were practised by the lowest races, both were in such cases, as in advanced society, exceptional and illegal modes of securing a wife. In other words, it was held by critics of the antiquarian criterion of selection that forms adjudged to be survivals had been greatly exaggerated and strangely misunderstood. At best, they had been used to imply without warrant that traits now infrequent were once common. They had been employed to reconstruct a past cultural whole on the basis of present insignificant remains.¹

The rationalism of nineteenth-century anthropology was tinctured with the presuppositions of utilitarianism. To the reforming jurist Bentham, for example, the corpus of law in advanced society could be divided for purposes of improvement into two categories. The first was composed of customs and statutes having meaning and utility for the practical modern world. The second was made up of the use-

¹ G. E. Howard, *A History of Human Marriage*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1904), pp. 158, 181, 184, 201-202. E. A. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, vol. 1 (5th ed., London, 1921), pp. 9-10, 19-20. J. R. Swanton "The Social Organization of American Tribes," *American Anthropologist*, ser. 2, vol. 7 (1905), pp. 663-673. B. Malinowski, *The Family Among the Australian Aborigines; a Sociological Study* (London, 1913), pp. vi.-vii.

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less, the obstructive, the anomalous and meaningless, or what he called 'vulgar errors'.¹ When, at the hands of folklorists, this standard of classification was applied to culture as a whole in order to detect survivals the former category was judged to be composed of the relatively new, which possessed limited historical interest. The latter, on the other hand, as the product of tradition, was made up of the old, and endowed with documentary significance. But to its critics, this criterion for the establishment of the relative age of culture elements seemed notably weak, illogical, and deceptive. Granting the soundness of existing standards of utility, some found themselves unable to concede that what is now useless once possessed use. Such an assumption, said they, was based upon the prior postulate that every idea and act had a rational beginning or had served some useful purpose. It was thus held to violate the doctrine of the ever-increasing rationality of man. It was challenged because it indicated "that our ancestors were more rational than we are", and maintained with purpose activities which we perpetuate without purpose.² Furthermore, it led to the conclusion that the first difficult advances in culture were made by men far more illogical than

¹ Jeremy Bentham, "The Book of Fallacies," in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. by John Bowring, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1843), p. 380.

² M. R. Cohen, "The Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences," in *The Social Sciences and Their Interrelations*, ed. by W. F. Ogburn and A. A. Goldenweiser (Boston, 1927), p. 449. Clark Wissler, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* (New York, 1929), pp. 218-220.

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their civilized successors who have only to repeat them and carry them on.¹ Finally, granting the utility of savage culture to savage man, some critics insisted that the same traits as perpetuated in civilization must have meaning and utility for civilized man. People hold ideas, new or old, said Cook, because in some way they commend themselves to their individual experience and knowledge. Therefore, the custom designated as a survival, far from being useless to those who practise it, fills a definitely felt need.²

The last criticism of the accepted criteria for the selection of survivals was even more fatal than any which have been mentioned. It issued logically from the unanswerable objection that survivals were ultimately detected by the use of the comparative method, the very technique they were invoked to sustain. But overlooking this, it took its departure from the related observation that survivals once detected were assumed, as relics of a savage condition, to be of equal longevity.³ Critics have contended that the selective procedure based upon the concept of the folk and the standards of antiquarianism, rationalism, and utilitarianism, were all alike in their failure to avoid this latter pitfall. In their anxiety to identify the European rustic with present primitive man, to reinstate the savage in the progressive series, and to recon-

¹ Cook, *The Study of Religions*, p. 185.

² Crawley, as cited, p. 447.

³ Krappe, as cited, pp. 178, 194.

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struct an institutional past hitherto inaccessible to the theoretical historian, adherents of Tylor's doctrine have adopted a naïve attitude toward the culture elements they desired to designate as documents. No effort has been made, until very recent years, to distinguish between those which might more properly have been considered parts of cultural stages later than the first savage condition. The insistent question, "what period, what state of society does the survival survive from?"¹ though frequently asked, has seldom been answered. All survivals are usually assumed to be of equal age and to have persisted throughout time from an equally remote and dateless antiquity.²

II

Efforts to advance beyond fugitive criticism to orderly revision of the doctrine of survivals though fewer and later, were more sustained than the somewhat uncertain misgivings intermittently thrown off in the course of its actual use. Curiously enough, too,

¹ Charlotte Sophia Burne, "Presidential Address," *Folk-lore*, vol. 22 (1911), p. 26.

² See further statements to a similar purpose in G. L. Gomme, "Science of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore Journal*, vol. 3 (1885), pp. 14-16; *Folk-lore*, vol. 4 (1893), pp. 1-24; Wissler, as cited, pp. 218-220; H. J. Rose, *Primitive Culture in Greece* (London, 1925), p. 43; W. R. Halliday, *Folk-lore Studies, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1924), pp. ix-xiv; *Greek and Roman Folk-lore* (New York, 1927); "Folk-lore," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 9 (1929), pp. 446-447; E. Sapir, *Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture; A Study in Method* (Ottawa, 1916), pp. 24-25, 46-47; W. D. Wallis, *Culture and Progress* (New York, 1930), p. 54.

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the revisionists, David George Hogarth (1862-1927) and Stanley Arthur Cook (1873-), were not folklorists or anthropologists. Neither were they students of classical antiquity nor the origin of literary forms. Confining their attention to Near Eastern and Old Testament lands, they were the twentieth-century successors of Thomsen, Boucher de Perthes, Worsaae, and others, those archæologists whose exhumed treasures had, in the first instance some fifty years before, provided the metaphorical bases of Tylor's position.

Hogarth's and Cook's problems, however, were infinitely more complex than those confronted by Tylor's archæological contemporaries. This complexity issued from the possession by students of Near Eastern cultures of two noteworthy bodies of material in addition to excavated artifacts; a history of exceptional length, and a sacred literature of almost unmatched age. Palestinian history as a chronicle of events pressed back the recovery of an archaic period to dates undreamed of by archæologists of Northern European areas. Sacred literatures, accepted as reverently in the present, after the passing of three or four millennia, as they had been in the past, paralleled the long historical record of cultural change with an equally extended one of religious fixity. However satisfactory the survival, defined as a rare, non-conforming, useless and irrational anomaly, might be

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for purposes of supporting the claim of primitive peoples to a first place in the developmental series, students of the Near Eastern civilizations could not but be conscious of its limitations as an instrument for dealing with the problem of the old in culture in its broader aspect—the permanence of the revered, useful, orthodox and typical. With this difficulty in mind, they not only dismissed the folk-lorists' "dilettante and casual" conception of the old, but their objectives as well. They maintained that attitudes and practices entertained by man are by the very fact of retention proved to possess utility. They took issue with the universally accepted definition of the cultural survival as a fragment of a dead lower culture which in the present has lost its meaning and function. They objected to the correlation of the old in culture with the silly, frivolous, and merely aesthetic or pleasure producing. They showed no desire either to follow Tylor and Lang in the reconstruction of primitive psychology, or Gomme in the recovery of the archaic past. To them the history of religious phenomena exemplified in the most striking manner the persistence in later culture of earlier forms of thought and practice. Their revision of the doctrine, therefore, took the form, first, of a statement of the reasons for its inapplicability to the larger problem of persistence in ritual and thought; and second, of a reformulation in conformity with their desire to deduce

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the permanent as over against the changeable, in human nature.¹

Hogarth's revision of the doctrine appears as the subject of a short presidential address to the section on anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1907. His first object was to justify, in the face of pious criticism, the efforts of anthropologists to deal with survivals in religion; his second, arising from a broader conception of the old in culture, to warn them against a too circumscribed notion of the materials with which they were dealing. Influenced by that other great orientalist, William Robertson Smith, whose work was informed with an interest in the indestructible features of religion,² by Frazer, whose *Adonis, Attis and Osiris* (1906) was an effort to demonstrate the essential similarity of ancient oriental worships, and possibly by Crawley,³ whose criticism of the doctrine of survivals had followed similar lines, Hogarth advised his audience of anthropologists against lumping together "all ele-

¹ An inquiry which had once been suggested by Crawley and postponed by Gomme as being too bold. (G. L. Gomme, *Folk-lore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908, p. 115).

² W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 16.

³ Crawley urged that "the history of religious phenomena exemplifies in the most striking manner the continuity of modern and primitive culture; but there is a tendency on the part of students to underestimate this continuity and, by explaining it away on a theory of survivals, to lose the only opportunity we have for deducing the permanent elements in human nature. . . . It may finally be asserted that nothing which has to do with human needs ever survives as a mere survival." (G. L. Gomme, *Folk-lore as an Historical Science* [1908], pp. 154-155.)

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ments in belief, observance, and ritual which have persisted from earlier systems to later under one head" without taking account of vital differences among the phenomena.¹ He acknowledged that certain elements might more or less rightly be regarded as survivals in the antiquarian, rationalist, and pathological sense. But he urged the necessity of making a distinction between old ideas which owe their presence in modern religious systems merely to the fact that they existed in a previous cult and have been transmitted to a succeeding one, regardless of their meaning in the new context, and that more significant group of elements whose reiterated appearance in all cults, primitive, ancient, and modern, bespeaks a bent or predisposition of the human mind itself.

In other words, Hogarth's revision of the doctrine of survivals was an effort at classification, not of survivals alone, but of all old elements in religious systems. This classification was composed of three groups. The first embraced "an immense body of religious persistences which are more or less rightly to be regarded as survivals in the ordinary pathological sense," having lost their meaning and expressing nothing vital to the religious sense.² The second was composed of elements which have persisted but "without implication of death or decay" because the religious masses feel instinctively that they are neces-

¹ Hogarth, as cited, p. 631.

² *Ibid.*, p. 637.

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sary to its expression, and demand their incorporation in any new system.¹ The third included a small and definite number of permanent religious concepts or categories of thought which owed their persistence not merely to conscious or unconscious transmission, but to limitations "imposed upon the human mind by its humanity".²

Cook's revision of the doctrine of survivals, in its final formulation, is similar to that of Hogarth's. In it is to be found the same impatience with the rationalists' and antiquarians' narrow conception of the old culture. It was reached after a similar term of severe apprenticeship in the craft of historical reconstruction. But Cook's interests, unlike those of his archæological colleague, were not rooted irretrievably in the past, in the more or less academic reconstruction of Near Eastern antiquity. Having made conventional attempts, in his earlier books,³ to recover early periods of law and religion in ancient Semitic cultures, in which the evidence of codes, scriptures, and monuments was supported by the study of survivals among contemporary Semitic peasantry, he turned, in the presence of international strife, from questions of history to questions of social control.

Cook is a sensitive student of the value and sources of contemporary religious and ethical ideas.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 633-634.

² *Ibid.*, p. 631.

³ S. A. Cook, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of the Hammurabi* (London, 1903); *The Religion of Ancient Palestine, in the Second Millennium B.C.* (London, 1908).

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The war of 1914-1918 seemed to him to usher in a transitional and critical period for which thought was unprepared. He was depressed by the failure of modern research to provide the kind of knowledge necessary for guidance in dealing with conflicting intellectual tendencies. The new and the old seemed alarmingly free to mingle without the control of educated judgment or discriminating social policy. Administrators appeared to be ignorant of the boundaries within which ideas might be susceptible to modification and change.¹ Therefore, he plunged into the arena of moral statesmanship and concerned himself thereafter with its most difficult question, the problem of "how to think about thought"² or the study of method in the social sciences.

As might well have been expected of a European student of religion, the vehicle chosen for this unusual enterprise was the Old Testament viewed "as a collection of phenomena which require an explanation".³ The wisdom of the choice for a student of the old and new in culture was unassailable. For in the Book itself he was presented with a body of ideas which, once recorded, had remained fixed in their written form. It reflected, furthermore, with the least possible distortion, the level of thought current at the time of writing. In it he possessed a literature at once the fruit of ancient experience and the horizon

¹ Cook, *The Study of Religions*, p. 13.
² *Ibid.*, p. xiv. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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of the hopes of living minds. It contained an ancient standard of ethical values which informed current systems of behaviour, and fused the urgent present with the remote and undatable past. In the Book's readers and commentators, on the other hand, whether partisans or critics, he confronted not only an impressive company reaching back from the modern world of bishops and factory hands to the ancient world of nomadic tribesmen and their prophets, but more important for a student of ethical permanence and mutability, a structure of interpretative thought having the Old Testament as a focus. This, at the instance of some individuals, had undergone change,¹ and, at the instance of others, had remained tethered to the past.

In order to meet the two problems set up by the susceptibility of interpretive and critical thought bearing on the Old Testament to either change or fixity, Cook had recourse to the methodological instruments familiar to contemporary scholarship in the social sciences, the concept of development and the doctrine of survivals. Unlike Tylor the developmentalist, however, Cook was not content with the envisagement of change as slow, gradual, continuous and progressive, nor with its demonstration by way of the comparartive method. Darwinism, with its added interest in the process of transition from form to form

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

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seemed to afford tools more appropriate to his materials and to the practical problem of intellectual transition from level to level. Also, when confronted in the Old Testament with the age of the Book, its uninterrupted acceptance by long generations of men, the significance of old interpretations to living minds, and the phenomenon which he called "reassertion" in thought, he found Tylor's doctrine of survivals inadequate. Desiring for the sake of unification of method to employ the same assumptions in accounting for permanence and the old, as he had already accepted in dealing with transition and the new, Cook read into Darwinism more, perhaps, than its author could have endorsed. He insisted that the old persisted for the same reason that the new was established, because of its fitness and selection for survival.

Cook's objections to the doctrine of survivals were stated with unusual detail and force. Like other critics, he pointed out that survivals were associated in the minds of their users with only one type of element, the irrational and primitive. They were compared with the geological and archæologically mutilated. It was assumed that culture elements, thus described and classified by current scholarship as out of harmony with the 'best' critical thought, were also useless and functionless to men at large. In all of this he was largely repeating or recombining arguments which had already been advanced against the doctrine. But,

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influenced by psychology as well as by Darwinism, and impressed with the part played by individual consciousness, Cook introduced another protest ; he deplored the anthropological procedure of dealing with "bare beliefs and practices" as objects in isolation from the men who maintained them. "Objectify as we may our ideas," he said, ". . . they depend upon individuals" who alone "are responsible for their persistence, survival and development."¹ He endeavoured consistently to humanize his discussion of thought, ideas and custom by constant appeal to the individual minds which were its instrumentalities. Were religious beliefs widely accepted by the average man to be regarded, according to the antiquarian and folklorist habit, merely as rare and curious "debris carried along the waves of time"?² Were they to be valued by the scientist only because, judged as backward by progressive minds, they permitted the reconstruction of the irrational mentality of the original savage?

Cook was willing to concede a certain amount of truth in this, the anthropologist's description and classification. He acknowledged survivals to be old elements. He accepted superstitions as useless and functionless to the sophisticated few who had turned professionally to the study of culture and thought. But he esteemed of small account the scientific discernment of scholars who, basing their procedure upon the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

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flattering notion of the ever-increasing rationality of man, set up their own body of thought as a standard of reference. He deprecated the practice of judging the place and meaning of a suspected idea or practice, not by its significance to the individuals entertaining it, but by its place and meaning to the learned. Value judgments of this sort be decried as futile in critical inquiry.¹ It is fatal, he said, to fancy that those whom we cannot understand lie outside the field of rational inquiry.² "The doctrine of survivals" in such hands, "is in fact a handy and cheap explanation of someone else's beliefs and practices—hardly of one's own."³ Thought or culture cannot be discussed critically in separation from the individuals who employ it and the satisfactions they themselves derive from it. The custom designated as a survival, far from being useless, therefore, fills a definite felt need. It could not be otherwise. For man works by the trial and error method. He eliminates all that is ineffective and sterile.⁴ People hold ideas for two reasons, "because in some way they commend themselves to their individual experience and knowledge", or "because nothing has occurred to modify, reshape or eliminate them".⁵ The doctrine of survivals itself survives for

¹ S. A. Cook, *The Study of Religions* (1914), p. 15.

² Cook, "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," as cited, p. 376.

³ Cook, *The Study of Religions*, p. xiii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177; Cook, "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," as cited, p. 400.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

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the same reason that the 'survival' survives, because, however unsuitable to the reflective student of the old when compared to alternative procedures, "it is in harmony with *some* of the facts of experience".¹

Returning after this appraisal of Tylor's doctrine to the guidance of Darwin, Cook asserted that the evolution of organisms and the vicissitudes of ideas have parallel features. Both organic and psychic phenomena seemed to him to manifest the intermingling of the old and new, and to demonstrate the fact that everywhere there is change, but everywhere there is no change. The new, whether biological or cultural, could be accounted for in terms of individual variation and selection from among 'radical' or 'progressive' proposals. It seemed not unwise, therefore, to assume that the process of selection which had made for growth had operated also among elements which seemed to be 'behind' the normal in thought, and made for fixity. Old elements thus selected for retention in the cultural whole were not to be regarded, however, as useless or irrational. On the contrary, as the residue from the continual weeding out of the unfit, they were to be employed by scholarship as a means of arriving at the boundaries or moulds within which thought as a human enterprise was inevitably to be cast. No longer dealing with the bizarre, quaint and irrational, the student of man with such clues

¹ Cook, *The Study of Religions*, p. xiii.

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might aspire to insight into the profound psychical similarities underlying and limiting external cultural differences.

Cook's criticism of the doctrine of survivals, his denial of the functionless character of certain beliefs and practices observed by living men, is, in a loose sense, merely a redefinition of Tylor's archæological description of survivals. Strictly speaking, however, his revision of the method to be employed in dealing with the problem of fixity and change in thought, defines the doctrine out of existence and dismisses it as a tool of thought. For, if as he insists there are no irrational, mutilated, and useless elements in present culture, there are no survivals. The problems the doctrine purported to solve remain either illusory or intractable. Scholars desiring to reconstruct a primitive mind in which the irrational, in Lang's words, "shall seem rational enough" are bereft of clues. Historians desiring to recover archaic periods are stripped of documents. All that remains is the revised classification already suggested by Hogarth; a division of present culture into new and old elements, the potentially changeable and the invincibly permanent. But Cook, with the interest of the statesman and scientist in mind, took a step in advance of Hogarth and converted into a new problem that which his fellow archæologist and orientalist had allowed to remain a mere classification. He held out the hope that

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from the study of the persistence among ordinary individuals of beliefs and practices rejected or repudiated by advanced thought, the scholar and moralist might arrive at that form of knowledge fundamental to social control, a description of the invariable in human thought, the necessary and impregnable boundaries of administrative change.

VI

SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL FIXITY

THE history of the doctrine of survivals, covering the better part of a century, displays in high relief an interval between two periods of doubt. During the first, humanistic inquiry, as based upon the tenets of eighteenth-century developmentalism, was brought to a halt by the theory of the degeneration of savagery. It was set in motion once more in the old methodological tradition by Tylor with the doctrine of survivals. It is now plain, however, that nineteenth-century social evolution, like its eighteenth-century exemplar, has fallen on evil days. Although Tylor may be credited with having salvaged the study of the old from antiquarian triviality, that work is not complete. And the doctrine of survivals has itself been found inadequate as an intellectual device for the recovery of social origins, the problem it was evoked to solve. Resting in the last analysis upon the loosest and most questionable of analogies, it possesses as a concept no consistent content or meaning. Denying to students of the cultural past tenable criteria for the selection and

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authentication of documentary materials, it fails to meet the elementary demands of technical and methodological integrity. Survivals, as one critic has well said, are of great historical interest "if we can only be sure we really have them".¹ Without that assurance, even convinced exponents of eighteenth-century procedures for the study of social change must forswear their use, and set aside as unsound the vast literature based upon their employment.

What, then, is to be done with survivals, the developmental hypothesis, and the problem of social change? Are students of change in culture, after replacing the identification of the culturally old with the folk, the curious, the quaint, rare, and irrational, with some new touchstone of antiquity, to retain the doctrine? Are they to return therewith to the recovery of social origins and the reconstruction of the natural, conjectural, hypothetical, or theoretical histories of social institutions? Such a resolution of difficulties would be attractive and relatively easy. Present defects are serious but not beyond remedy. Revision would lead to improvement in social inquiry and still retain all of the comfortable assurances of developmentalism.

Unfortunately or fortunately, however, theulti-

¹ Edward Sapir, *Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture; a Study in Method* (Ottawa, 1916), p. 24.

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mate criticism of Tylor's procedure does not issue from its lack of consistent meaning or the absence of reliable tests for the determination of the age and authenticity of culture elements designated as survivals. Far graver fault is to be found with the logical confusion which derives the doctrine from the presuppositions of developmentalism, the hypothesis under indictment, together with the employment of cultural entities apprehended as fixed or immutable for the purpose of demonstrating a process of inevitable and continuous change.

It is undeniable that survivals, as a category of old elements, propagate more problems than they purport to solve. They set questions for which the current developmentalist methodology has no answer. Why, for example, do survivals survive? Why does man, the utilitarian and rational, retain the culturally meaningless and fantastic? Who will venture to explain why, if social change is orderly, its path has been bestrewn with partly cherished, partly repudiated odds and ends? Where in the literature of social evolution may the inquirer find an explanation of the persistence of religion, the family, the state, property, literary forms, or even thought-forms themselves? In other words, the presence in all cultures not only of the rare and old, but of the pervasive and permanent in the form of the social institutions themselves, is the stuff and substance of a problem

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distinct from that attacked by students of social development. It suggests that man's activity will remain unexplained and uncontrolled until the problem of social change is paralleled by an inquiry into the process or processes of social fixity.

Of course, the challenge of such a problem has not remained entirely ignored. There is a certain amount of evidence in the literature that the question "Why have survivals survived?" with its corollaries, has intruded more than once into the peaceful prosecution of developmental inquiry. Upon occasion even Tylor realized that survivals had to be accounted for. When compelled by the exigencies of his argument to refer to the matter, he was always fertile in suggestion and sometimes brilliant in metaphor. Customs and habits, he said, are maintained by force of habit, or because futile practices are associated with other proceedings by no means futile.¹ At another time, stupidity, impractical conservatism and dogged superstition were cited as the means by which "the traces of the history of man have been preserved". Again, as though at a loss to deal with the matter, he appealed to biology for a solution and ascribed the survival of survivals to the natural selection of the most fit.² Spencer maintained that the

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. 1 (7th ed. New York, 1924), pp. 136-137; 133. This explanation found favour with other students. See William Crooke, "The Scientific Study of Folk-lore," *Folk-lore*, vol. 23 (1912), pp. 21-22.

² Tylor, as cited, vol. 1, pp. 156, 69.

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old continues until the new is ready for acceptance.¹ Cook asserted that survivals, though meaningless to the educated, persist among average human beings because they are in harmony with some of the facts of experience and are useful to those who entertain and practise them.² He held that change in thought or activity involves reformation, not abandonment of the old; hence the normal, average, or popular is restored after periods of criticism, and thought moves backward to find the truth.³ Marett, pleading for a sympathetic search for the collective souls of peoples, handed the problem over to the social psychologists with the enigmatic suggestion that survivals are perpetuated "because they are the constantly renewed symptoms of that life of the folk which alone has the inherent power of surviving in the long run."⁴ The economist, Ogburn, ascribed the persistence of culture elements, by definition useless, to their utility.⁵ The neurologist and anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers, asserted that there must be "psychological processes of some kind, probably conservatism, underlying the continuity of human activity shown in survivals."⁶ The sociologist Ross,

¹ Herbert Spencer, *Study of Sociology* (18th ed., London, 1897), p. 396.

² S. A. Cook, *The Study of Religions*, *passim*.

³ Cook, "Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," as cited, p. 282. A. L. Armstrong, *Transitional Eras in Thought* (London, 1904), pp. 56-58, 61, 134, 136-137.

⁴ R. R. Marett, *Psychology and Folk-lore* (London, 1920), p. 26.

⁵ W. F. Ogburn, *Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature* (New York, 1922), pp. 147, 195.

⁶ W. H. R. Rivers, "Survival in Sociology," *Sociological Review*, vol. 6 (1918), p. 303.

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ascribed a condition which he chose to call social ossification to mental laziness, control by the old, veneration of precedent, resistance to change by vested interests, ancestor-worship, and the over-valuation of the classics.¹ Gomme, in the only relatively careful effort to deal with the problem, ascribed the initial impairment of culture elements, designated as survivals, to an historical event in the form of the conquest of an indigenous people. He accounted for their retention, as impaired elements, on the assumption that invasion had resulted in the arrest of natural development.² In other words, although answers to the riddle have been offered, they cannot be taken seriously. They fall short of the requirements of logic on three counts. They violate the definition of survivals as irrational or useless. They beg the question by finding the source of survivals in the nature of man or culture. And finally, they take flight to the concept of social development, the very proposition survivals purport to substantiate.

There is evidence in the literature of sociology and adjacent fields that a problem somewhat resembling that of cultural or institutional persistence, the problem of social statics, has at least given pause to thought. Attempts to give an off-hand explanation of what Comte called the "spontaneous order of

¹ E. A. Ross, *Principles of Sociology* (1st revision, New York, 1930).
PP. 451-457, 573.

² G. L. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folk-lore* (New York, 1892), p. 4.

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human society", or to define the conditions and laws of social harmony, are literally legion. As might well be expected, the larger number of these are of a mental nature, ascribing stability to psychic forces, such as instinct, imitation, inherent automatism, or attitudes toward change. "There seem to be certain psychological forces," said Ogburn in his volume on social change, "that tend to produce orderliness . . . a tendency to prevent deviations in the direction of social confusion."¹ Again, order is held to be due to an instinct for order or a sense of 'oughtness';² and social conformity is often traced to automatic action enforced by habit.³ Stability, according to the historian Bryce, is due to indolence, deference, sympathy, compulsion, agreement, and reason.⁴ According to the sociologist Ross, the foundations of order are sympathy, sociability, the sense of justice and resentment.⁵ Innumerable students of the problem of social statics find the source of its several manifestations, such as convention, custom, habit and law,

¹ Ogburn, as cited, pp. 184-185.

² E. A. Ross, *Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order* (New York, 1908) p. 5. F. C. Bartlett, *Psychology and the Soldier* (Cambridge, 1927), p. 119.

³ Franz Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life* (New York, 1928), p. 138. Ross L. Finney, *A Sociological Philosophy of Education* (New York, 1928), p. 441. Bernard Bosanquet, *Science, Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York, 1927), p. 245.

⁴ James Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, vol. 2 (New York, 1901), pp. 467-474.

⁵ Ross, as cited, pp. 5-6.

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in fear of change,¹ distrust of the unknown,² the hatred of variety, the pain of a new idea,³ the fatigue of thought,⁴ inertia, or an inclination for the line of least resistance.⁵ Still others, looking to institutions for an answer to the question, point to religion and education as conserving devices in stationary societies. Bagehot correlates stability with bigotry,⁶ George Cornwall Lewis, with an endowed and privileged priesthood.⁷ Ross calls attention to the founding of social order upon systems of education,⁸ which Finney describes as being devoted to social reproduction.⁹ The institution of private property, or the wide distribution of ownership,¹⁰ are frequently regarded as arresting forces. Both war¹¹ and peace¹² are

¹ Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics, or Thoughts on the Application of Natural Selection and Inheritance to Political Society* (New York, 1872), p. 55. Ogburn, as cited, p. 190. Lord Hugh Cecil, *Conservatism* (London, 1912), p. 10. Bryce, as cited, p. 463.

² Elsie Clews Parsons, "Holding Back in Crisis Ceremonialism," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 18 (1916), p. 41.

³ Bagehot, as cited, pp. 60-61.

⁴ Cecil, as cited, p. 10.

⁵ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, as cited, vol. pp. 70-71. Ogburn, as cited, pp. 162-163.

⁶ Bagehot, as cited, pp. 151, 154, 163. See also Frederick Pollock, *Essays in Jurisprudence and Ethics* (London, 1882), pp. 145-147; Cecil, as cited, p. 244; Ross, as cited, pp. 127 ff.

⁷ George Cornwall Lewis, *An Essay on the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion* (2d ed., London, 1875), pp. 206-207.

⁸ Ross, as cited, p. 164. See also Ogburn, as cited, pp. 178-179.

⁹ Finney, as cited, p. 453.

¹⁰ Samuel Henry Prince, *Catastrophe and Social Change* (New York, 1920), p. 19. Bagehot, as cited, pp. 53-55.

¹¹ Ross, as cited, p. 50. Bagehot, as cited, p. 146. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), p. 14.

¹² Prince, as cited, pp. 119-121.

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charged with a similar social function, as are over-population¹ and geographical isolation.²

All of which leads to but one conclusion, namely, that where there are so many solutions there can be but little knowledge. It suggests that since, in the words of Comte, "statical study . . . consists in the investigation of the laws of action and reaction of the different parts of the social system apart, for the occasion, from the fundamental movement which is always gradually modifying them," sociology is itself based upon developmental presuppositions and offers no procedure for the student of the culturally fixed or persistent. It fortifies the position of those who assert that the present difficulty in the social sciences arises from the fact that inquirers have had eyes for but one body of material, the culturally new, and have set themselves but one problem, the problem of social change. The conclusions inevitably emerging from such a survey demand a candid re-examination of the canons of developmentalism as a means of accounting for the cultural present. Fortunately the first steps in this direction, both in biology and the social studies, have already been taken.

In the words of a contemporary historian of

¹ Albion W. Small, *General Sociology: An Exposition of the Main Development in Sociological Theory from Spencer to Ratzenhofer* (Chicago, 1905), p. 190. Theodor Waitz, *Introduction to Anthropology*, ed. by J. F. Collingwood (London, 1863), pp. 349-350. Boas, as cited, p. 160.

² Bagehot, as cited, p. 214. Prince, as cited, pp. 119-121. Boas, as cited, p. 131.

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method in the social studies, natural science in the eighteenth century "achieved the notable result of envisaging the differences with which we are confronted in the present world as the product of changes which have taken place in the past."¹ Transmitted to subsequent thought, this presupposition, together with the envisagement of change as progressive, gave rise in biology to Darwinian evolution. In the study of culture, it led to the search for institutional origins and the reconstruction of a developmental social series on the model afforded by Auguste Comte. Nevertheless, more than one inquirer in both fields found himself ill at ease. Confronted by the irrefutable evidence of a co-existence of the old and new, the presence of fixity in the midst of change, a biological associate of Darwin asserted that "any admissible hypothesis of progressive modification must be compatible with persistence without modification through indefinite periods."² The same thought was repeatedly expressed by later biologists.

Similarly, through the same mid-century period, students of man were brought face to face with the facts of cultural persistence. Out of anthropology in 1858 came the assertion by Waitz that "it is nothing short of poetical fancy which endows primitive man with a desire for intellectual progress. . . .

¹ Frederick John Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven, 1925), p. 129.

² Thomas Henry Huxley, "Geological Contemporaneity," (1862) in his *Collected Essays*, vol. 8 (New York, 1894), pp. 289-290, 304.

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He never from internal impulse, and without external agency, desires to become civilized . . .”¹ It was Waitz’s conviction that humanistic inquiry, as restrained by a philosophy of history which had grown out of physiology and psychology rather than the consideration of events, had failed to deal with a fundamental question. “We are yet very far,” he said, from being able to indicate “why . . . the history of one people has undergone a different process of development from that of another; why one people has no history at all, and in another the sum of mental performances never exceeds a certain limit.”² He advocated the investigation, on the one hand, of what delays or prevents man’s development, and on the other, of what induces him to leave his primitive state. Out of jurisprudence a few years later came an even more emphatic statement of the same position. “The difference between stationary and progressive societies,” said Maine, “is one of the great secrets which inquiry has yet to penetrate.”³ A large proportion of the human race will not so much as “tolerate a proposal or an attempt to change its usages, laws, and institutions. Vast populations, some of them with a civilization considerable but peculiar, detest that which in the language of the West would

¹ Waitz, as cited, pp. 290-291.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³ H. S. Maine, *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society and its Relation to Modern Ideas* (New York, 1917), pp. 14-15.

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be called reform. The entire Mohammedan world detests it. The multitudes of coloured men who swarm in the great continent of Africa detest it, and it is detested by the large part of mankind which we are accustomed to leave on one side as barbarous or savage."¹ Constrained by these observations, Maine's great effort to deal with the problem of change in law was confined to the small group of societies which could safely be classified as progressive. But he insisted that no one is likely to succeed in the investigation of the cultural present in its entirety who "does not clearly realize that the stationary condition of the human race is the rule, the progressive the exception."² In the course of an endeavour to arrive at the principles of political action, Bagehot, to mention but one more name, also referred to the rarity of progressive change and to fixity as an invariable ingredient of early civilizations.³ "The great difficulty which history records," said he, "is not the first step, but that of the second. What is most evident is not the difficulty of getting a fixed law, but of getting out of a fixed law; not cementing a cake of custom, but breaking the cake of custom."⁴

It must be remembered, however, that mere in-

¹ Maine, "The Age of Progress," in *Popular Government: Four Essays* (New York, 1886), pp. 131 ff.

² Maine, *Ancient Law*, as cited, pp. 158.

³ Bagehot, as cited, p. 158.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53. See discussion of Hogarth and Cook above, Chapter V, Part II.

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terest in a question has never solved a problem, nor has the observation of a phenomenon, unassisted by a procedure of investigation, accounted for its existence. Although Waitz, Maine, Bagehot, and innumerable others called attention to the presence of stationary societies, cultural fixity, and institutional persistence, neither anthropologist, jurist, nor student of politics attempted to unravel the secret. Their work together with that of more recent inquirers has suggested, however, that a solution is not unattainable. The incoming generation of scholars, particularly those students who aspire to arrive at something other than descriptions of differences in culture, are finding it increasingly difficult to rely upon eighteenth-century concepts and thinly disguised appeals to the comparative method. The doctrine of survivals is gone. The footless elaboration of argument concerning the origin of social institutions is in disrepute. The phenomenon of the old in culture, the culturally permanent and persistent is all but elevated from the sterile level of observation to that of systematic investigation. For the second time in a century social reform and scientific inquiry in the social sciences confront a sustained attack upon the idea of progress as an organizing principle in research. The anti-progressionist argument implicit in the criticisms of the doctrine of survivals is more formidable than the position assumed by proponents

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of the theory of the degeneration of savagery. Barring the appearance of an advocate more persuasive than a second Tylor, developmentalism may well suffer defeat, and the study of man be launched out upon seas of discovery guided by new instruments of navigation.

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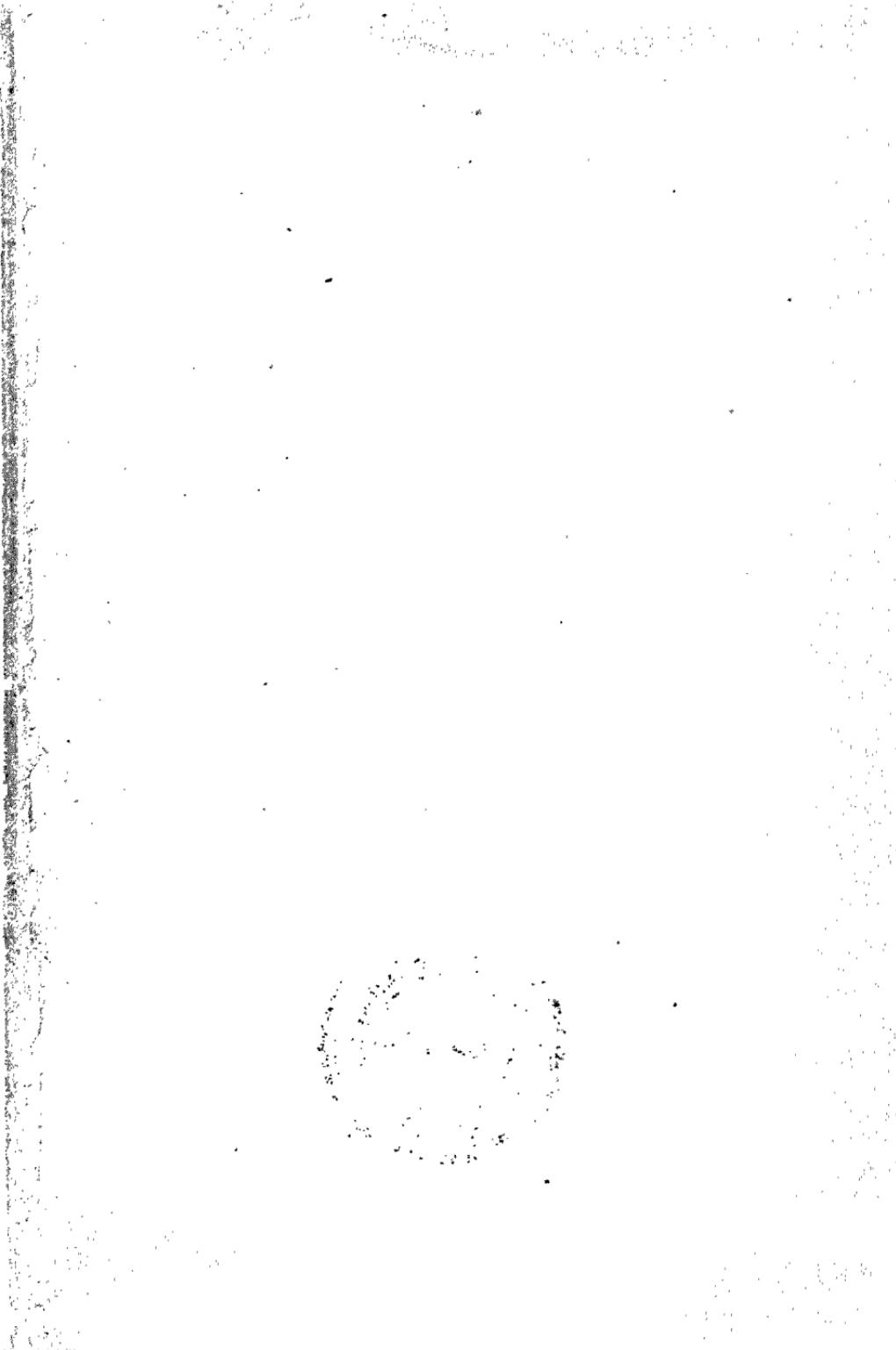
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